Rise of Dalit Leadership

In the Politics of Maharashtra: A Sociological Analysis

By Mr. Ganesh Shrirang Satarkar

ISBN: 978-93-5779-250-9

Academic Research | Sociology | Political Studies

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Author

Mr. Ganesh Shrirang Satarkar

Maharashtra Students' Union Leader at CUH

Chairman, Maharashtra Students Association at CUH

Chairman, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Janmotsav Samiti,at CUH

Central University of Haryana (CUH), Haryana.

CUH- Central University of Haryana, Haryana.

" We are always committed to supporting, empowering, and promoting the welfare, unity, and cultural heritage of the Maharashtrian Marathi People community across the world. "

1. **BOOK TITLE : RISE OF DALIT LEADERSHIP IN POLITICS OF MAHARASHTRA: A SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS**
2. **LANGUAGE:** ENGLISH
3. **ISBN: 978-93-5779-250-9**
4. **EDITION:** FIRST EDITION
5. **AUTHOR: Mr. GANESH SHRIRANG SATARKAR**
6. **PUBLISHER/ PUBLISHING AGENCY** :-
7. **M/s. Mr. GANESH SHRIRANG SATARKAR –** SHIVNERI, GAT NO 153, FARANDWADI, MANE MALA TAL PHALTAN, DIST - SATARA. MAHARSHTA, PIN 415523 INDIA
8. **CONTACT DETAILS:**
   MOBILE: +91 7066766607 **EMAIL:** GANESHNALE0@GMAIL.COM
9. **YEAR OF PUBLICATION:** 2026
10. **FORMAT:** SINGLE-COMPONENT RETAIL PRODUCT (BOOK)
11. **PRICE (IN INDIA):** ₹ 10 /- (**Printed and Published in India)**

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Department of History
[Modern History]
हरियाणा केंद्रीय विश्वविद्यालय
CENTRAL UNIVERSITY OF HARYANA
विद्याधनं सर्वधनप्रधानम्

BIOGRAPHY : ADV. GANESH SHRIRANG SATARKAR

Adv. Ganesh Shrirang Satarkar is an emerging legal scholar, researcher, and academic contributor working at the intersection of law, criminology, sociology, and digital governance. He is currently associated with the Central University of Haryana, where he is pursuing postgraduate research in sociology alongside his interdisciplinary work in legal studies.

He holds an LL.M. in Criminal Law, LL.B. (Special), and has qualified the UGC-NET in both Law and Criminology. His academic research focuses on criminal justice systems, cybercrime, artificial intelligence in law, media and crime, governance studies, and socio-legal research.

Adv.Ganesh has contributed to national and international academic platforms through research publications, conference papers, and interdisciplinary collaborations. His work explores emerging legal challenges in areas such as digital justice, cyber security, social justice, gender studies, and technological transformations in legal systems.

He is actively connected with several international academic and research platforms including ORCID, Web of Science, SSRN, Vidwan (INFLIBNET), Google Scholar, OSF, and Harvard Dataverse.

Author Bio Researcher Profiles :

1. ResearchIDs : rid131046
2. Orcid Id : https://orcid.org/my-orcid?orcid=0000-0001-8474-7432
3. ISNI : https://isni.org/isni/0000000529498911
4. Web of Science ResearcherIDOYE-6264-2025
5. Social science research network SSRN Author ID: 9293272
6. Vidwan Profile URL: https://vidwan.inflibnet.ac.in/profile/666713
7. Google Scholar : https://scholar.google.com/citations?hl=en&user=4MrvCEwAAAAJ
8. OSF ID : https://osf.io/cndj8/
9. harvard.edu : https://dataverse.harvard.edu/dataverse/GANESHSHRIRANGSATARKAR).
10 https://about.me/adv.ganeshsatarkar

Email: ganeshnale0@gmail.com | adv.ganeshsatarkar@gmail.com
Mobile: +91 7066766607 | +91 9422422932

ADV. GANESH SHRIRANG SATARKAR

----- ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ------

First and foremost, I express my sincere gratitude to **MY PARENTS** for their constant encouragement, blessings, and unwavering support throughout my academic journey. Their sacrifices and motivation gave me the strength to complete this dissertation entitled **"RISE OF DALIT LEADERSHIP IN POLITICS OF MAHARASHTRA: A SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS."**

I am deeply thankful to my Supervisor, **Dr. YUDHVIR**, Assistant Professor, Department of Sociology, Central University of Haryana, for his valuable guidance, encouragement, and continuous support during this research work. I also express my heartfelt thanks to **DR. T. LONGKOI KHIAMNIUNGAN**, **HOD,** and faculty members including **DR. REEMA GILL** and **DR.TANVI BHATI, DR. KASHMIRA KHANAM, MR. SOM PATHAK**. For their academic support and suggestions.

I **Extend Special Thanks** to the **PEOPLE OF MAHARASHTRA, ESPECIALLY THE MARATHI COMMUNITY, And THE GOVERNMENT OF MAHARASHTRA** for providing valuable support and resources for this study. Finally, I thank my friends and Almighty God for their constant support and blessings.

Sd /-

NALE GANESH SHRIRANG
Roll No. 240322
M.A. – Master of Arts (Sociology)
Department of Sociology
Central University of Haryana

Special Inspiration and Support

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the following individuals for their special inspiration, encouragement, and support—both direct and indirect—which greatly contributed to the successful completion of this work:

1. **My Small Sister, Kamini Alhawat**
2. Ashish
3. Muhammed Nihal
4. Ranjit Sharma
5. Ritika Choudhary
6. Ananya Singh
7. Vikas Kumar Pandey
8. Daljeet
9. Songmao T
10. Jyotishana
11. Deepika
12. Shweta Tomar
13. B. Udaya Laxmi
14. Bandana Khundrakpam
15. Hiba Fatima
16. Sonamdizi Chhatria
17. Belina Mutum
18. Himanshi Yadav
19. Yuvraj

Their constant motivation, friendship, guidance, and support—whether direct or indirect—have been a source of strength and inspiration throughout my academic journey and in the successful completion of this book.

=== GANESH ====

AWAAZ

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY
SAFARNAMA
Farewell Party
MISS FAREWELL

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ISO 9001:2015 Registration No: QT-56622/0925
Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises Registration Number: 11-0093948
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ABBREVIATIONS

Sr. No.	Abbreviation	Full Form
1	SC	Scheduled Castes
2	ST	Scheduled Tribes
3	RPI	Republican Party of India
4	SCF	Scheduled Castes Federation
5	ILP	Independent Labour Party
6	BSP	Bahujan Samaj Party
7	BJP	Bharatiya Janata Party
8	NCP	Nationalist Congress Party
9	INC	Indian National Congress
10	DP	Dalit Panther
11	PWP	Peasants and Workers Party
12	BA	Before–After
13	SPSS	Statistical Package for the Social Sciences
14	MLA	Member of Legislative Assembly
15	MLAs	Members of Legislative Assembly
16	OBC	Other Backward Classes
17	Rs.	Rupees
18	H0	Null Hypothesis
19	H1	Alternative Hypothesis
20	$\mu 1$	Mean of First Group
21	$\mu 2$	Mean of Second Group
22	Dr.	Doctor
23	Adv.	Advocate
24	No.	Number
25	Vol.	Volume
26	Dept.	Department
27	Ltd.	Limited
28	Govt.	Government

29	Univ.	University
30	Socio-Eco.	Socio-Economic
31	Pol. Sci.	Political Science
32	Edu.	Education
33	Const.	Constitution
34	Adm.	Administration
35	Demo.	Democracy
36	Econ.	Economics
37	Psych.	Psychology
38	Hist.	History
39	Org.	Organization
40	Comm.	Communication
41	Elect.	Election
42	Stat.	Statistics
43	Resp.	Respondent
44	Avg.	Average
45	Vidhan Sabha	Legislative Assembly
46	Neo-Buddhist	Newly Converted Buddhist Community

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CHAPTER–I

INTRODUCTION AND THEORETICAL UNDERSTANDING OF DALIT LEADERSHIP

1.1 INTRODUCTION

"भीमा कोरेगांव स्मारक का दर्शन करते हुए एवं पुष्पहार अर्पित कर श्रद्धांजलि देते हुए।"

The process of Scheduled Caste political participation and electoral politics was initiated by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. He advocated the idea of the Scheduled Castes becoming a "ruling community" through political empowerment and democratic participation. During the post-independence period, leaders such as Dadasaheb Gaikwad, Prakash Ambedkar, Ramdas Athawale, Namdev Dhasal, P. N. Rajbhoj, Kanshi Ram, and Mayawati emerged as significant figures in Scheduled Caste politics and electoral mobilization. This paper reviews their leadership and contribution to Dalit political movements. The state of Maharashtra was

formed on 1 May 1960. Between 1962 and 2024, eleven Legislative Assembly (Vidhan Sabha) elections were conducted in the state. During these elections, 288 Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) were elected from constituencies reserved for Scheduled Castes. Their electoral participation, political representation, and inter-party competition are examined and analysed Both social and political leaders play crucial roles in bringing social changes and overall social transformation. History in India shows that leaders have been the leading actors in socio-political movements. The ideology and philosophy of socio-political leaders such as Gautama Buddha, Ashoka, Jyotirao Phule, Savitribai Phule, Shahu Maharaj, Mahatma Gandhi, B. R. Ambedkar, and Kanshi Ram stood for social equality, social justice, and human rights that were denied to the weaker sections of Indian society. These saints, social reformers, freedom fighters, and political leaders struggled against exploitation, discrimination, and the denial of human rights. Dr. Ambedkar fought for equality in employment, education, and the political system. He played a crucial role in the upliftment of Dalits and other vulnerable sections of Indian society. One of the main factors determining the success or failure of any movement is the nature and dynamism of its leadership. Leaders' strategic actions determine the direction, scope, and type of movement. History shows that most socio-political movements in India and elsewhere were guided by strong leadership. Their leadership provided vision, direction, and guidance. However, the emerging Dalit movement in India, though successful to some extent, later stagnated. Except for the dynamic leadership of Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar, Dalit movements have often faced conflicts and contradictions among their leaders. This fragmented leadership delayed the development and progress of the Dalit community. Indian politics has long been considered caste-based politics. Even today, caste remains influential in almost every sphere of life. Although political awareness has increased significantly, Dalit concerns continue to receive limited attention, and Dalits often remain marginalized.The traditional caste-based social structure had informal leaders representing their caste groups. Elders within castes handled disputes and social issues among members. Such leadership operated mainly within caste institutions and aimed at preserving traditional customs and social relationships.

Source :- Wikipedia contributors. (n.d.). *Wikipedia*. Wikimedia Foundation. Website: https://www.wikipedia.org

These leaders ensured the observance of social norms and values. Informal leadership existed within each caste, and the elders, commonly known as Panchas, usually held hereditary status. The caste Panchayat system existed in most Indian villages, but Untouchables were excluded from village-level Panchayats. In the Chaturvarna system, the Antyajas or Untouchables, being considered a servile class, were not allowed to raise their voices in village councils. Although Untouchables also had elders acting as Panchas, their authority was limited only to their caste community. During the colonial period, the introduction of new economic systems, educational policies, and military recruitment created opportunities for social change in India. These developments generated awareness among Hindus, including Ati-Shudras and Untouchables. In pre- and post-independent India, educated Scheduled Castes became change agents and leaders within their communities. Traditional illiterate leadership gradually came under the influence of modern educated Dalit leadership. According to Vivek Kumar, traditional Indian society provided leadership opportunities mainly to wealthy upper-caste individuals, excluding Dalits because of their low ritual and economic status. By the 1920s, Dalit leaders had emerged in various parts of India, though they lacked complete ideological independence. Dalit leadership in western and southern India became more active compared to

northern and eastern India. Despite comparatively lower gender inequality among Dalits, Dalit leadership rarely encouraged leadership development among women. Dalits historically had limited access to political participation because of educational backwardness, low socio-economic status, and dependence on upper castes. Khan (1980) observed that Dalits in traditional India were excluded from political power and lacked recognized leadership. This resulted in low representation in social and political spheres. Dalits were not only deprived of political power but were also neglected socially and culturally. Wikipedia contributors (n.d., https://en.wikipedia.org

"भीमा कोरेगांव स्मारक का दर्शन करते हुए एवं पुष्पहार अर्पित कर श्रद्धांजलि देते हुए।"

Dr. Ambedkar is regarded as the first major leader of the oppressed classes in India. He attempted to establish a relationship between social equality and political independence. He fought against poverty, social discrimination, and oppressive traditions. According to him, after 1920, the progress of depressed classes became primarily a political issue rather than merely a social issue. Dr. Ambedkar dedicated himself to the upliftment of Untouchables and challenged age-old discriminatory practices. Dalit leadership became a source of inspiration for Dalits who were denied basic human rights and treated as inferior in Indian society. Dalit leaders spread awareness regarding rights and social justice. In Maharashtra, Dalits gained social consciousness through social reform movements, reservation policies, and socio-economic changes. Consequently, they strengthened their

economic position and developed political awareness, demanding equality, representation, and social justice. Dalits attempted to enter formal power structures through participation in village politics and reserved political seats. Leadership emerged mainly from educated and numerically dominant Dalit groups. Historical developments such as the Battle of Bhima Koregaon, the Satyashodhak Samaj movement led by Jyotirao Phule, and Shahu Maharaj's reservation policy of 1902 laid the foundation for modern Dalit leadership. These changes enabled Shudras and Ati-Shudras to access education, military service, and political institutions previously denied to them. Dr. Ambedkar's major political achievements for Dalits occurred between 1919 and 1932. During this period, Dalits were recognized as a separate political group deserving special electoral safeguards. Dr. Ambedkar advocated separate electorates for Dalits, though he later accepted the common electorate system through the Poona Pact of 1932. He founded organizations such as the Independent Labour Party (1936) and the Scheduled Castes Federation (1946) to advance Dalit political and social rights. He also envisioned the Republic Party of India (RPI) as an alliance of Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes, and minorities. Today, Dalit leadership is often divided along party lines. Many leaders focus on symbolic demands, such as renaming streets or installing statues of Dr. Ambedkar, while more fundamental issues like atrocities against Dalits, land distribution, educational opportunities, economic empowerment, and reservation implementation remain inadequately addressed. Political reservation aims to provide Scheduled Castes representation so that they can voice community grievances and pressure governments to address injustices. Unlike many other leaders, Scheduled Caste leaders represent historically marginalized groups facing both material and psychological barriers deeply rooted in Indian society.

1.2 Theoretical Understanding of Dalit Leadership

Dalit political leadership in India can only be properly understood within the broader framework of the Indian caste system and the hierarchical structure of Hindu society. Indian society has historically been characterized by deep social stratification based on caste. The caste system created rigid divisions among people and assigned unequal social, economic, religious, and political status to different groups. For centuries, this system determined the opportunities, occupations, rights, and dignity available to individuals. In such a structure, Dalits occupied the lowest position and suffered exclusion, humiliation, and exploitation in almost every sphere of life. The Indian social structure was traditionally organized through the Chaturvarna system, which divided society into four broad categories:

Brahmins, Kshatriyas, Vaishyas, and Shudras. Outside this hierarchical order were the Untouchables, later identified as Dalits, who were denied recognition as equal human beings. They were treated as impure and excluded from temples, educational institutions, public resources, and political participation. Their social exclusion was justified through religious beliefs and customs, making caste not only a social institution but also a religiously sanctioned mechanism of inequality. As a result, Dalits were deprived of dignity, opportunities, and fundamental rights for centuries. The caste system can be described as a hereditary and permanent social hierarchy. Sociologist Gerald Berreman defined caste as a hierarchy of endogamous divisions in which membership is determined by birth and remains fixed throughout life. Such divisions involve inequality in both social status and access to resources and services. The caste system institutionalized discrimination by restricting social mobility and assigning occupations according to birth. Consequently, Dalits were confined to degrading occupations and denied equal opportunities in education, economy, religion, and politics. The system also maintained limited interaction between castes and encouraged social segregation. The caste system became the "steel frame" of Hindu society because it regulated social behavior, relationships, occupations, and access to power. The Untouchables, being placed at the bottom of the hierarchy, faced humiliation and discrimination in everyday life. They were denied entry into temples, schools, and public places and were forced to live in segregated settlements outside villages. The notion of purity and pollution reinforced their exclusion and legitimized unequal treatment. Thus, caste became a powerful instrument for preserving social domination by upper castes while ensuring the subordination of Dalits. The advent of British colonial rule brought certain changes to the caste system. Before British rule, Indian society was largely rural and isolated, with limited communication, transportation, and education. Under such conditions, caste exercised tremendous control over people's lives. However, the British introduced modern education, industrialization, transportation, communication systems, and administrative reforms. These changes gradually weakened the rigid boundaries of caste and created opportunities for social mobility. The establishment of courts, modern law, and constitutional principles challenged some discriminatory social customs and promoted the idea of equality before law. **(Berreman)**

Sociologist M. N. Srinivas observed that pre-British India had very few cities, and those cities differed greatly from modern urban centers. Urbanization and industrialization introduced by the British brought individuals from different castes into common workplaces and educational institutions. This weakened traditional caste restrictions and encouraged social interaction.

Similarly, G.S. Ghurye noted that British policies reduced the power of caste institutions to exclude individuals, prohibit widow remarriage, or enforce rigid caste practices. New laws guaranteed equality before law and allowed people to seek justice through courts instead of caste councils. The establishment of the rule of law played a revolutionary role in changing the status of Dalits. Frank Moraes argued that equality before law challenged the foundations of caste hierarchy because it recognized Untouchables as individuals with legal rights. English education also introduced modern ideas of liberty, equality, and justice, which inspired oppressed communities to question caste discrimination. These developments encouraged Dalits to organize themselves politically and socially in order to demand equal rights and dignity. After India achieved independence, the Constitution of India became a major instrument for social transformation. The Constitution guaranteed liberty, equality, justice, and fundamental rights to all citizens irrespective of caste, religion, gender, or region. It abolished untouchability under Article 17 and introduced provisions for affirmative action through reservations in education, employment, and political representation. Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes were provided constitutional safeguards to ensure their participation in public life. As a result, many Dalits gained access to education, government employment, and political institutions that were previously denied to them. The emergence of Dalit political leadership must therefore be understood as a product of historical oppression, social struggle, constitutional reforms, and political mobilization. Dalit leadership developed not merely as an ordinary political phenomenon but as a movement against centuries of exclusion and inequality. Dalit leaders emerged as representatives of marginalized communities and sought to challenge the oppressive structures of caste domination. Their leadership became a means of social awakening, political assertion, and collective empowerment**.(M. N. Srinivas)**

1.2.1 Leadership

Leadership is a universal phenomenon present in every sphere of human activity. Whether in politics, religion, education, literature, medicine, industry, or social reform, leadership plays a crucial role in guiding people toward collective goals. A leader is generally understood as a person who influences and directs others. Leadership involves the relationship between a leader and followers based on shared interests, goals, and values. Effective leadership inspires confidence, creates unity, and motivates people to achieve common objectives. In the context of oppressed communities such as Dalits, leadership becomes even more significant because it acts as a force for resistance, social awareness, and political participation. Dalit leadership has historically attempted to challenge inequality, mobilize marginalized groups, and demand

justice and dignity. Leadership among Dalits is therefore not only organizational but also transformative and emancipatory in nature.

"महाड़ सत्याग्रह (चवदार तालाब सत्याग्रह) स्थल पर भ्रमण करते हुए तथा डॉ. बाबासाहेब आंबेडकर के उस संदेश को स्मरण करते हुए कि 'जाति व्यवस्था के विनाश के बिना सामाजिक, राजनीतिक और आर्थिक सुधार संभव नहीं हैं।'"

1.2.2 Definitions of Leader and Leadership

Different scholars have defined leadership in various ways. According to the Dictionary of Education, leadership is the ability and willingness to inspire and guide others toward collective goals. Leadership implies that the group accepts the leader as its representative and spokesperson. Linderman defined a leader as an individual whose judgments, feelings, and ideas are accepted by the group as the basis of action. Similarly, Ordway Tead described leadership as the activity of influencing people to cooperate toward a common objective. Psychologist Floyd Allport emphasized the personal relationship between leader and follower. According to him, leadership involves direct and personal social control through face-to-face interaction. Bernard focused on the psychological aspect of leadership and argued that leaders are individuals who can influence others through psychological stimuli and collective responses. Robert Tannenbaum and Fred Massarik described leadership as interpersonal influence directed toward achieving specific goals through communication. These definitions

demonstrate that leadership is a complex and multidimensional concept. No single definition can fully explain leadership because leadership varies according to context, personality, ideology, and social conditions. This complexity becomes particularly important in understanding Dalit leadership, which combines social protest, political mobilization, and moral transformation. **(Dictionary of Education, n.d.)**

1.2.3 Theories of Leadership

Scholars have proposed different theories to explain the emergence and functioning of leadership. These theories help in understanding how leaders influence society and mobilize people.(Ordway Tead & Dwight Sanderson, n.d.)

1. Trait Theory

The Trait Theory focuses on the personal qualities and characteristics of leaders. According to this theory, leaders possess certain physical, intellectual, and emotional traits that distinguish them from ordinary individuals. Scholars such as Ordway Tead and Dwight Sanderson emphasized qualities like self-confidence, intelligence, courage, sympathy, and assertiveness as essential traits of leadership. Trait theory assumes that leadership is linked to personality characteristics and natural abilities.

2. Functional Theory

Functional Theory explains leadership in terms of the functions performed by leaders for the benefit of the group. Leaders emerge because groups require guidance, coordination, and problem-solving. According to this theory, leadership is not merely about personal traits but about fulfilling the needs of society or organizations. In the case of Dalit movements, leaders emerged because oppressed communities needed representation, protection, and mobilization against caste oppression.

3. Reputational Theory

Reputational Theory argues that leadership is based on popularity and public recognition. Individuals who gain respect, fame, and influence within society become leaders. In many social movements, charismatic personalities become symbols of collective aspirations because of their reputation and public image. Dalit leaders such as B. R. Ambedkar gained enormous influence because they represented the hopes and struggles of marginalized communities.

4. Situational Theory

Situational Theory explains that leadership develops according to specific circumstances and challenges. Leaders emerge in response to social crises, political conditions, or collective needs. Social oppression, inequality, and injustice often create situations that require strong leadership. Dalit leadership emerged largely because of the oppressive conditions created by caste hierarchy and social exclusion.

5. Positional Theory

Positional Theory defines leaders as individuals who hold official positions in institutions or organizations. Authority and legitimacy are derived from the position occupied by a person. Political representatives, bureaucrats, and organizational heads are examples of positional leaders. In democratic India, many Dalit leaders entered formal political institutions through constitutional provisions such as reservations.

1.2.4 Max Weber's Classification of Political Leadership

German sociologist Max Weber classified leadership into three categories: charismatic, traditional, and legal-rational leadership.

1. **Charismatic Leadership**

   Charismatic leadership is based on extraordinary personal qualities possessed by a leader. Followers believe that the leader has exceptional abilities, vision, or moral strength. Such leaders inspire emotional attachment and devotion. Dr. Ambedkar's leadership among Dalits can be understood partly through charismatic authority because millions viewed him as a liberator and visionary leader.

2. **Traditional Leadership**

   Traditional leadership is based on customs, traditions, and inherited authority. Tribal chiefs, monarchs, and patriarchal heads are examples of traditional leaders. People obey them because of established traditions rather than personal qualities or legal authority.

3. **Legal-Rational Leadership**

Legal-rational leadership derives authority from laws, rules, and institutional positions. In modern democratic societies, political leaders and bureaucrats exercise power based on constitutional legitimacy. Such leadership emphasizes rules, procedures, and rational organization.

1.2.5 Harold Lasswell's Classification of Leadership

Political scientist Harold Lasswell applied psychological analysis to political leadership. He identified two major types of leaders: political agitators and political administrators. Political agitators attempt to arouse mass emotions and mobilize people toward specific political objectives. Political administrators focus on governance, organization, and maintaining institutional order. Both types of leadership are important in political systems and social movements.

1.2.6 Burns and James Classification of Leadership

James MacGregor Burns emphasized the relationship between leaders and followers. According to him, leadership cannot be understood without analyzing the mutual interaction between leaders and the people they influence. Burns identified two forms of leadership: transactional and transformational leadership. Transactional leadership is based on exchange relationships. Leaders provide benefits, services, or rewards in return for support, votes, or cooperation. This form of leadership is common in political parties and bureaucratic systems. However, transactional leadership often lacks moral inspiration and long-term transformation. Transformational leadership, on the other hand, seeks moral and social transformation. Transformational leaders inspire followers to achieve higher ethical and social goals. Such leadership raises the level of consciousness, values, and aspirations among both leaders and followers. Dr. Ambedkar's movement against caste discrimination represented transformational leadership because it aimed not only at political rights but also at social dignity, equality, and human liberation.

1.2.7 Marvin J. Folkerts' Classification of Leadership

Marvin J. Folkerts Jr. analyzed leadership in relation to political ideology. According to him, ideologies include revered personalities, authoritative texts, and theories explaining political existence. Based on ideological functions, he classified leaders into founders, revisionists, practitioners, and missionaries. Founders establish new ideologies or movements, revisionists

reinterpret existing ideologies, practitioners implement ideological principles, and missionaries spread ideological messages among people. This ideological perspective is highly relevant for understanding Dalit leadership because Dalit movements are deeply connected with ideas of social justice, equality, human rights, and dignity. Leaders such as Dr. Ambedkar not only organized political struggles but also developed ideological frameworks challenging Brahmanical domination and caste hierarchy. After examining different definitions and theories of leadership, it becomes clear that leadership cannot be explained through a single factor. Personality, social conditions, ideology, institutional position, and historical context all contribute to the emergence of leadership. In the case of Dalit leadership, multiple factors such as caste oppression, educational opportunities, constitutional safeguards, political mobilization, and ideological awakening played important roles. Dalit leadership emerged as a response to historical injustice and became an instrument for social transformation and democratic participation.

"पुणे स्थित ऐतिहासिक महात्मा फुले वाड़ा का भ्रमण करते हुए एवं महात्मा ज्योतिराव फुले के समता और सामाजिक न्याय के विचारों को नमन करते हुए।"

1.3 Dalit

The **term "Dalit" occupies a significant place in the socio-political discourse of modern India.** It represents not merely a social category but also a historical experience of oppression, exclusion, humiliation, and resistance. In contemporary India, the term Dalit is commonly used for those communities that were historically regarded as "Untouchables" within the Hindu caste hierarchy. These communities have suffered centuries of social discrimination,

economic exploitation, political marginalization, and cultural exclusion because of the rigid caste system. The emergence and acceptance of the term Dalit symbolize the assertion of identity, dignity, and human rights by oppressed communities who were denied equality and justice for generations. Indian society has traditionally been organized around the caste system, which created a deeply hierarchical social structure. In this system, Dalits were placed at the lowest position and were considered outside the Chaturvarna order. They were denied access to temples, education, wells, roads, and public institutions. Their occupations were regarded as impure, and they were forced to perform degrading and menial labor. Social customs and religious doctrines legitimized their exclusion, thereby making untouchability a deeply rooted institution in Indian society. Even after India achieved independence and adopted a democratic Constitution guaranteeing equality and justice, Dalits continued to experience violence, discrimination, and atrocities in various forms**. (Dalit Panther Movement, 1970s)**

The term Dalit reflects the contradiction and inequality embedded within Indian society. Historically, Dalits have been referred to by various names such as Chandals, Avarnas, Achhuts, Adi-Dravidias, depressed classes, Harijans, and Scheduled Castes. Many of these terms were imposed by upper castes, colonial administrators, or reformers, and often carried derogatory or paternalistic meanings. However, after the rise of the Dalit Panther Movement in the 1970s, oppressed communities increasingly preferred the term "Dalit" because it represented resistance, self-respect, and collective identity. The adoption of this term was therefore an act of political assertion against caste oppression and social humiliation. The concept of Dalit extends beyond the Scheduled Castes alone. In a broader sense, the term can include all oppressed and marginalized groups such as Scheduled Tribes, neo-Buddhists, landless laborers, poor peasants, women, and economically exploited communities. However, in most academic and political discussions, the Scheduled Castes form the central category of Dalits because they have historically faced the most severe forms of untouchability and exclusion. Therefore, the study of Dalit politics and leadership largely focuses on Scheduled Castes as the core group representing Dalit identity and struggle. (Government of India Act, 1935)

1.3.1 Definition of Dalit

The term Dalit is derived from the Sanskrit root "dal," which means "to break," "to crush," "to split," or "to oppress." Etymologically, Dalit refers to those who have been

broken or oppressed by the social order. The term became widely used in several North Indian languages and eventually evolved into a political and sociological category. The Punjabi dictionary **Mahan Kosh** by Bhai Kahan Singh Nabha defines Dalit as a person belonging to the lowest caste who has been trampled upon or crushed by upper castes. This definition clearly highlights the oppressive nature of caste relations in Indian society. One of the most influential definitions of Dalit was provided by Professor Gangadhar Pantawane, founder and editor of **Asmitadarsh.** According to him, Dalit is not merely a caste identity but a symbol of exploitation, human suffering, and revolutionary consciousness. He argued that Dalits reject social beliefs and religious ideologies that justify inequality, slavery, and caste hierarchy. Instead, they believe in humanism, equality, and social transformation. In this sense, Dalit identity is both a critique of oppression and an assertion of liberation. The modern use of the term Dalit gained prominence among followers of B. R. Ambedkar and neo-Buddhist activists in Maharashtra during the 1970s. Dalit came to signify communities that had been intentionally oppressed and denied dignity through caste hierarchy. Scholar Eleanor Zelliot explained that the term contains an implicit rejection of concepts such as purity, pollution, karma, and hereditary inequality. Thus, Dalit identity challenged the ideological foundations of caste discrimination. Historically, the sociological use of the term Dalit can also be traced to Jyotirao Phule, who used it while criticizing Brahmanical domination and caste oppression during the nineteenth century. Dr. Ambedkar himself used the term occasionally in his writings and newspapers such as *Bahishkrit Bharat*. However, he often employed different terms according to political context. When dealing with colonial authorities, he used the term "depressed classes," while in relation to caste Hindus he referred to Dalits as "Bahishkrit," meaning those excluded from society. These terminologies reflected the social reality of exclusion and marginalization experienced by Dalits. **(Government of India Act, 1935)**

Dalit identity must also be understood in economic terms. Scholars have argued that Dalits are not only socially oppressed but are also economically exploited. They are often denied ownership of land, means of production, and access to economic resources. Consequently, Dalits remain dependent on dominant castes for livelihood and survival. However, poverty alone does not define Dalitness. A poor person may suffer economic deprivation, but a Dalit experiences both economic and socio-cultural exclusion. Dalits are discriminated against because of caste identity, and this discrimination extends into social interaction, religious participation, educational opportunities, and political representation. The Dalit Panther Manifesto of 1973 significantly broadened the meaning of

Dalit identity. Inspired by the Black Panther Movement in the United States, the Dalit Panthers viewed Dalits as all those who were socially, politically, economically, and religiously exploited. This included Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, neo-Buddhists, landless laborers, poor peasants, women, and working-class communities. The manifesto transformed Dalit identity into a revolutionary political category that represented all marginalized groups fighting against oppression and inequality. Over time, various names were used to describe oppressed castes. Terms such as Untouchables, Harijans, depressed classes, and Scheduled Castes became common in administrative and political discourse. The term "Harijan," popularized by Mahatma Gandhi, was criticized by many Dalit activists because it carried a paternalistic meaning and did not challenge caste hierarchy. Similarly, the colonial term "depressed classes" emphasized backwardness but not resistance. The constitutional term "Scheduled Castes" is an administrative category used for implementing affirmative action policies. In contrast, Dalit is a self-chosen identity rooted in struggle, resistance, and dignity. The Government of India Act of 1935 officially introduced the term Scheduled Castes for communities entitled to special political safeguards and welfare measures. Later, the Constitution of India adopted this terminology for legal and administrative purposes. Reservations in education, employment, and political institutions were provided to Scheduled Castes as part of constitutional commitment toward social justice. However, despite these legal safeguards, caste discrimination persisted in many forms. Therefore, Dalit movements continued to emphasize the need for social transformation beyond constitutional reforms. Dalit identity is therefore not simply descriptive; it is political and transformative. It reflects collective consciousness among oppressed communities who seek equality, dignity, and liberation. The acceptance of Dalit identity represents the first step toward self-respect and resistance against caste domination. Many Dalits embraced this identity with pride because it allowed them to challenge humiliation and assert their humanity. In this sense, Dalit identity became a powerful force in modern Indian politics and social movements.

The emergence of Dalit consciousness was greatly influenced by Dr. Ambedkar's conversion to Buddhism in 1956 at Nagpur. This historic event symbolized rejection of caste-based Hindu social order and acceptance of a religion based on equality, compassion, and rationality. Neo-Buddhism provided Dalits with an alternative cultural and religious identity free from the stigma of untouchability. Nevertheless, the term Dalit continued to gain more political significance because it directly expressed the historical reality of oppression and

resistance. Even in contemporary India, Dalits continue to face discrimination and violence despite constitutional guarantees of equality. Cases of caste atrocities, social boycott, discrimination in education, manual scavenging, and economic exclusion demonstrate that caste hierarchy remains deeply entrenched. Therefore, Dalit identity continues to function as a symbol of protest and social justice movements. It reminds society of unfinished struggles for equality and human rights. (James MacGregor Burns,)

1.3.2 The Dalit Leadership

Dalit leadership emerged as a response to centuries of oppression and exclusion. It has been a continuous source of inspiration and mobilization for Dalit masses struggling against upper-caste domination. Dalit leadership is closely linked with Dalit movements, social reform initiatives, and political organizations. The central feature of Dalit leadership is that it originates from individuals born within Dalit communities who directly experienced caste discrimination and actively participated in struggles against oppression. This distinguishes Dalit leadership from general leadership or reformist leadership provided by upper-caste social reformers. The rise of Dalit leadership was influenced by socio-economic and political changes introduced during British rule. Colonial administration introduced modern education, legal reforms, transportation, communication systems, and representative political institutions. These developments created opportunities for educated Dalits to emerge as leaders and spokespersons for their communities. Separate electorates and political representation further encouraged the growth of Dalit political consciousness. Dalit political leadership can broadly be divided into two categories: dependent leadership and independent leadership. Dependent Dalit leadership remained subordinate to dominant political forces led by upper castes. Such leaders attempted reforms within the framework of the existing social order but lacked ideological independence. They depended heavily on mainstream political parties for political survival and often acted according to party interests rather than independent Dalit agendas. Leaders such as Jagjivan Ram, G.A. Gavai, Ram Vilas Paswan, and Buta Singh are often cited as examples of this type of leadership. Dependent Dalit leadership played a limited role in transforming caste relations because it rarely challenged the foundations of Brahmanical social order. Such leaders usually demanded reforms, welfare measures, and political participation within the existing framework rather than radical social transformation. Consequently, their influence was often restricted by dominant political parties and upper-caste interests. (Lynch, 1974) In contrast, independent Dalit leadership emerged as a radical and transformative force. Independent leaders maintained autonomy over their organizations,

ideologies, and political movements. They did not subordinate themselves to dominant upper-caste political forces. Instead, they mobilized Dalits independently and demanded structural changes in society. Such leaders believed that Dalits were entitled to equality and justice not as charity but as a matter of rights. The most prominent example of independent Dalit leadership is Dr. B.R. Ambedkar. He organized Dalits politically, socially, and intellectually to fight against untouchability and caste discrimination. Ambedkar argued that social democracy must accompany political democracy. He demanded separate electorates, constitutional safeguards, educational opportunities, and representation in administration. He also founded organizations such as the Bahishkrit Hitakarini Sabha, Independent Labour Party, and Scheduled Castes Federation to advance Dalit interests. Independent Dalit leaders emphasized direct action and political mobilization. They organized satyagrahas, protests, movements, and public campaigns against social discrimination. The Mahad Satyagraha of 1927, led by Dr. Ambedkar, symbolized Dalit assertion of equal rights to public water resources. Similarly, temple entry movements and campaigns for education and representation challenged caste-based exclusion. These struggles transformed Dalits from passive victims into active participants in democratic politics. The ultimate objective of independent Dalit leadership was social transformation rather than superficial reforms. Such leadership aimed to dismantle caste hierarchy and establish an egalitarian society based on liberty, equality, and fraternity. Dalit leaders recognized that caste oppression was not merely social but also economic, political, and cultural. Therefore, the struggle for Dalit liberation required comprehensive transformation of Indian society. After independence, the democratic political system created new opportunities for Dalit leadership. Universal adult franchise enabled Dalits to participate in elections and political institutions. Constitutional safeguards provided reservations in legislatures, government jobs, and educational institutions. Panchayati Raj institutions also opened spaces for local-level Dalit leadership. As a result, Dalits increasingly entered formal political structures and became visible participants in democratic governance. However, Dalit leadership in independent India has faced several challenges. Many Dalit leaders became integrated into mainstream political parties and lost independent ideological direction. Electoral politics often encouraged factionalism and divisions within Dalit movements. Moreover, upper-caste domination of economic and social resources continued to limit Dalit empowerment. Despite reservations and political representation, Dalits frequently remained dependent on dominant castes in rural areas. (Robert Tannenbaum & Fred Massarik,)

"कोल्हापुर में छत्रपति राजर्षि शाहू महाराज को श्रद्धापूर्वक नमन करते हुए।"

Traditionally, political power in rural India was concentrated in the hands of wealthy upper castes. Even after the abolition of the Zamindari system, upper castes continued to dominate local politics and administration. The rise of Dalit leadership challenged this dominance and created tensions within rural society. Upper castes often viewed the political assertion of Dalits as a threat to traditional social hierarchy. Consequently, conflicts emerged between dominant castes and newly empowered Dalit leaders. Dalit leadership also played a crucial role in raising awareness regarding constitutional rights and social justice. Leaders encouraged Dalits to pursue education, political participation, and collective organization. They emphasized the importance of self-respect, unity, and social consciousness. Through movements, literature, and political activism, Dalit leaders transformed the psychology of oppressed communities and inspired confidence among marginalized groups. In recent decades, Dalit politics has become increasingly diverse and fragmented. Different political parties and organizations claim to represent Dalit interests. Some focus on electoral alliances and welfare policies, while others continue to emphasize radical social transformation. The emergence of parties such as the Bahujan Samaj Party under Kanshi Ram and Mayawati demonstrated the possibility of independent Dalit political assertion at the national level. These developments reflected the growing political consciousness and aspirations of Dalit communities. Despite progress in political representation, Dalit leadership continues to confront serious challenges such as caste

violence, economic inequality, social discrimination, and political co-option. Many Dalit leaders struggle to balance electoral politics with the broader goals of social transformation. Furthermore, divisions based on sub-castes, regional identities, and party affiliations often weaken collective Dalit movements. Nevertheless, Dalit leadership remains an essential force in Indian democracy because it continues to articulate the demands of equality, justice, and human dignity. The study of Dalit leadership is therefore crucial for understanding the dynamics of Indian democracy, caste relations, and social movements. Dalit leaders have transformed Indian politics by bringing issues of social justice, representation, and human rights into mainstream political discourse. Their struggles challenged centuries-old structures of oppression and expanded the meaning of democracy in India. Dalit leadership is not merely about political power; it is fundamentally about the quest for dignity, equality, and liberation for historically oppressed communities.

"केंद्रीय विश्वविद्यालय हरियाणा के समाजशास्त्र विभाग के विद्यार्थी के रूप में शैक्षणिक भ्रमण के दौरान डॉ. बाबासाहेब आंबेडकर के प्रतापसिंह हाई स्कूल, सातारा से जुड़े ऐतिहासिक स्थानांतरण प्रमाणपत्र का अवलोकन करते हुए।"

CHAPTER – II
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Introduction

"मेरी माता जी द्वारा डॉ. बाबासाहेब आंबेडकर और भगवान गौतम बुद्ध को श्रद्धापूर्वक नमन एवं पूजन करते हुए।"

A review of literature is an essential component of scientific research because it enables researchers to understand the nature, scope, theoretical orientation, and methodological dimensions of previous studies conducted in a specific field. Through the review of existing literature, researchers can identify research gaps, evaluate previous findings, and establish the relevance of their own study. It also provides an intellectual foundation for framing hypotheses, selecting appropriate research methods, and interpreting empirical findings. In social science research, particularly in studies relating to leadership, caste, and marginalized communities, literature review becomes crucial because it connects contemporary realities with historical and theoretical perspectives. The present study focuses on Dalit political leadership, particularly in Maharashtra. A critical examination of earlier studies reveals that although there has been considerable research on caste, social mobility, Panchayati Raj institutions, leadership patterns, and Dalit movements, systematic and detailed studies exclusively focusing on Dalit political leadership remain limited. Most earlier works have concentrated on broader issues such as caste hierarchy, rural leadership, social mobility, elite formation, and the role of political institutions in shaping marginalized communities.

Only a few scholars have specifically examined the emergence, functioning, and transformation of Dalit leadership in the political sphere. The review of literature included in the present chapter critically examines important scholarly contributions relating to leadership studies in general and weaker section leadership in particular. It attempts to understand how different researchers have analyzed rural leadership, elite politics, caste mobility, Scheduled Caste participation, and Dalit movements. This review provides theoretical and empirical insights that are useful for understanding the changing nature of Dalit leadership in India and Maharashtra. (Ghanshyam Shah, 1975)

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2.2 Review of Research Studies

Understanding Leadership in Marginalized Communities

Leadership is a dynamic social process through which individuals influence groups and guide collective action. In Indian society, leadership has traditionally been linked with caste hierarchy, economic power, land ownership, and educational status. Historically, upper castes occupied dominant leadership positions while Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes remained excluded from political power and decision-making processes.

After independence, democratic institutions, constitutional safeguards, reservations, and social movements created opportunities for Dalits and other weaker sections to participate in leadership roles. The literature reviewed in the text attempts to understand how these changes occurred and what factors shaped the rise of Dalit leadership.

The studies reviewed show that Dalit leadership developed through multiple processes:

1. Educational advancement.
2. Political participation.
3. Social reform movements.
4. Religious conversion movements.
5. Reservation policies.
6. Panchayati Raj institutions.
7. Urbanization and modernization.
8. Ambedkarite ideology.
9. Dalit literary and cultural movements.
10. Democratic constitutional reforms.

These factors collectively transformed Dalits from socially excluded communities into politically conscious groups demanding equality, dignity, and representation.

Ayyappan A. (1967), Tribal leadership in India. in his important study on tribal leadership in Kerala, made one of the earliest sociological attempts to understand how leadership develops among marginalized and socially excluded communities in India. His research focused on the socio-economic conditions of tribal groups and examined the factors responsible for the emergence of leadership within these communities. Traditionally, tribal societies in India were organized around customary practices, kinship relations, and hereditary authority. Leadership was generally inherited and was closely linked to age, clan position, ritual authority, and traditional knowledge. However, Ayyappan observed that social change and modernization were gradually transforming these traditional patterns of leadership. He argued that new leadership was increasingly emerging from individuals who possessed better economic resources, educational qualifications, literacy, and social awareness. According to him, factors such as ownership of land, improved economic status, knowledge of religion and traditions, and social prestige became important determinants of leadership among tribal communities. Individuals who acquired education and economic strength gained confidence and social recognition, which enabled them to occupy influential positions within society. Ayyappan further pointed out that modernization introduced new opportunities for tribal

communities through schools, administrative institutions, political participation, and developmental programs. As a result, tribal leaders were no longer selected only on the basis of hereditary customs or ritual status, but also on the basis of merit, awareness, and ability to interact with modern institutions. Educated tribal individuals began acting as intermediaries between the government and their communities, helping people access welfare schemes, educational facilities, and political representation. This marked the transition from traditional leadership to modern democratic leadership. The study is sociologically significant because it demonstrated that marginalized communities were capable of producing effective leadership when provided with social and economic opportunities. It challenged the assumption that weaker sections lacked leadership qualities and instead emphasized the importance of structural opportunities in leadership development. Ayyappan's work also highlighted the close relationship between education and social mobility. Education not only improved economic conditions but also created political consciousness, self-confidence, and organizational ability among tribal people. These findings later became highly relevant in studies related to Dalit leadership and the political empowerment of weaker sections in India. The study therefore contributed greatly to the understanding of how social transformation, modernization, and education can reshape traditional social structures and create new forms of leadership among historically disadvantaged communities.

Sahay B.N. (1969), Dynamics of Leadership, made an important contribution to the sociological understanding of leadership in Indian society. His study focused on the patterns, processes, and changing nature of leadership in emerging rural India. At a time when India was undergoing rapid social transformation after independence, Sahay attempted to explain how leadership was shaped by broader social, economic, cultural, and political changes. He argued that leadership is not a fixed or static phenomenon; rather, it is dynamic and continuously influenced by the changing conditions of society. According to Sahay, leadership evolves with transformations in social structure, economic development, political institutions, and cultural values. Therefore, leadership should be understood as a process that adapts itself to the needs and realities of society. To support his arguments, Sahay conducted a detailed study of six villages and analysed the factors responsible for the emergence and functioning of local leaders. His findings revealed that leadership depends on several interconnected factors such as cultural values, economic conditions, political changes, social relationships, and the degree of community participation. He observed that leaders are not created in isolation but emerge through social interaction and collective recognition within the community.

Individuals who possess economic resources, social influence, educational qualifications, and organizational abilities often gain leadership positions. Sahay further emphasized that Indian rural society was experiencing major transformations due to modernization, democratic decentralization, and increasing social mobility. The introduction of Panchayati Raj institutions, expansion of education, spread of communication, and political awareness had altered traditional patterns of authority. Earlier, village leadership was mainly controlled by dominant castes, wealthy landlords, and hereditary elites. However, with social change and democratic participation, new sections of society gradually began to enter leadership roles. This process made rural leadership increasingly complex and diversified. Sahay's study is sociologically significant because it highlighted the relationship between leadership and broader social structures. He argued that leadership cannot be understood only by examining individual personalities or personal qualities. Instead, leadership must be analysed within the context of changing cultural systems, economic inequalities, political institutions, and social relationships. This perspective later became highly relevant in understanding Dalit political leadership and the emergence of leadership among marginalized communities. The study demonstrated that leadership patterns change along with societal transformation and that democratic processes can create opportunities for weaker sections to participate in positions of authority. Thus, Sahay's work remains an important contribution to leadership studies in India and provides a theoretical foundation for analyzing social and political leadership in changing societies.

Sirsikar V.M. (1972), The Rural Elite in Developing Society: A Study in Political Sociology examined the nature of rural leadership and the functioning of the Panchayati Raj system in India. His work focused on the relationship between democratic decentralization and rural political structures. After independence, the Panchayati Raj system was introduced to strengthen democracy at the grassroots level and encourage people's participation in local governance and rural development. Sirsikar analysed how far these democratic institutions were successful in achieving their objectives and what role local leadership played in this process. His study revealed that despite the establishment of democratic institutions in villages, rural political power largely remained concentrated in the hands of dominant castes and economically powerful groups. Wealth, land ownership, caste status, and traditional social prestige continued to determine who occupied leadership positions in rural society. As a result, there existed a significant economic and social gap between leaders and ordinary villagers or followers. According to Sirsikar, this inequality weakened the proper functioning

of democracy because the interests of weaker and marginalized sections were often ignored. He argued that true democracy at the village level could not function effectively unless leadership became more inclusive and representative of all sections of society. The study also emphasized that the success of Panchayati Raj institutions depended greatly on the quality of grassroots leadership. Leaders at the village level played an important role in guiding political development, implementing welfare programs, resolving local disputes, and promoting social change. However, when leadership remained monopolized by dominant castes, democratic decentralization became limited in practice. Sirsikar pointed out that political participation alone was not sufficient if weaker sections such as Dalits and poor peasants lacked social power and economic resources. Although democratic rights were legally available to everyone, actual participation was influenced by caste hierarchy, social status, and economic inequality. Therefore, Panchayati Raj institutions often reproduced traditional power relations instead of transforming them. This study is sociologically significant because it highlighted the structural inequalities present within local governance systems in rural India. It showed that democracy is not merely a political arrangement but is deeply connected with social and economic structures. Sirsikar's work demonstrated that democratic institutions cannot function successfully unless there is social equality, political awareness, and inclusive participation. For Dalits and other marginalized communities, the study suggested that legal rights and electoral participation alone were insufficient for empowerment. Genuine political empowerment required leadership development, social mobility, education, and the weakening of caste-based domination. Thus, Sirsikar's analysis provided an important understanding of the limitations of grassroots democracy in India and the challenges faced by marginalized groups in accessing political power and leadership positions within rural society.

"छत्रपति शिवाजी महाराज की माता राजमाता जिजाबाई के प्रेरणादायी जीवन और आदर्शों को स्मरण करते हुए।"

Owen M. Lynch in his famous 1974 study Politics of Untouchability and Jatav Mobility examined the social and political transformation of the Jatav community (traditionally identified as Chamars) in Agra, Uttar Pradesh. His work is considered a landmark contribution to the study of Dalit mobility and caste politics in India. Lynch analyzed how the Jatavs attempted to improve their social status after independence through education, political participation, economic advancement, and collective organization. A major contribution of Lynch's study was his criticism of the theory of Sanskritization proposed by M. N. Srinivas. Sanskritization suggested that lower castes could rise in status by adopting the customs, rituals, and lifestyle of upper castes. However, Lynch argued that the Jatavs did not primarily seek mobility by imitating upper-caste Hindu practices. Instead, they developed a separate political and social identity based on self-respect, education, organization, and Dalit consciousness. The Jatavs increasingly aligned themselves with the ideas of B. R. Ambedkar and used democratic institutions, electoral politics, and caste associations to challenge social discrimination. Lynch showed that Dalit mobility was not merely cultural imitation but also a political struggle for equality and dignity. Thus, the study highlighted the importance of

political mobilization and identity assertion in the process of Dalit empowerment in modern India.

Owen M. Lynch, (1974), Rejection of Sanskritization: Lynch's Analysis of Jatav Mobility Sociologist Owen M. Lynch, in his famous study Politics of Untouchability and Jatav Mobility explained the social and political transformation of the Jatav community of Agra. His study became important because it challenged the traditional sociological theory of Sanskritization. The theory of Sanskritization was developed by M. N. Srinivas. According to this theory, lower castes tried to improve their social status by imitating upper-caste customs, rituals, food habits, and lifestyles. Lower castes adopted vegetarianism, wore upper-caste style clothes, performed Brahmanical rituals, and abandoned occupations considered impure. Srinivas believed that through imitation, lower castes could gradually move upward in the caste hierarchy. However, Lynch found that the Jatavs rejected this method. The Jatavs realized that even after following upper-caste customs, they were still treated as "untouchables." Therefore, they concluded that imitation alone could not end caste discrimination. Instead of copying upper castes, they challenged the caste system itself. This marked a shift from cultural imitation to political and social struggle. One important feature of this rejection was the refusal to accept caste hierarchy. The Jatavs demanded equality, dignity, and social justice rather than recognition from upper castes. The ideas of B. R. Ambedkar strongly influenced them. Ambedkar encouraged Dalits to "educate, agitate, and organize" instead of depending on upper-caste approval. Lynch also observed that democratic politics became an important tool for social mobility. After independence, the Jatavs actively participated in elections, joined political parties, and demanded political representation. Political power became more important than ritual status. Democracy provided opportunities that were denied under the traditional caste order. Another important factor was political organization. The Jatavs formed caste associations and political groups to fight discrimination and demand rights. These organizations helped create unity, political awareness, and educational advancement. Collective action replaced individual attempts at Sanskritization.

Ambedkarite ideology further strengthened this movement. The Jatavs supported ideas such as equality before law, constitutional rights, Dalit pride, social democracy, and education. Instead of trying to become like upper castes, they developed pride in their own identity. The Constitution of India also played a major role in Jatav mobility. Reservation policies, Fundamental Rights, political representation, and legal protection against untouchability gave Dalits new opportunities. The Jatavs used constitutional rights, education,

and political participation to improve their condition. Lynch concluded that Sanskritization was not the only path of mobility. Dalits could achieve progress through political struggle,organization, constitutional rights, and democratic participation. His study highlighted the rise of Dalit consciousness and modern forms of social mobility in India.

B.R Ambedkar's Leadership and Dalit Mobility

B. R. Ambedkar played a central role in the political awakening of Dalits in modern India. In his study Politics of Untouchability and Jatav Mobility, Owen M. Lynch explained how Ambedkar emerged as a pan-Indian Dalit leader despite not belonging to the Jatav caste or the Agra region. Ambedkar was from the Mahar community of Maharashtra, yet his ideas inspired Dalit communities across different regions and castes. Lynch argued that Ambedkar's influence spread because his ideology addressed the common experiences of untouchability, discrimination, and social exclusion faced by Dalits throughout India. Ambedkar did not focus only on one caste; instead, he spoke for all oppressed communities. His message of equality, dignity, liberty, and justice created a new sense of identity among Dalits. He encouraged them to reject caste oppression and fight for their constitutional and political rights. One of Ambedkar's greatest contributions was the development of political consciousness among Dalits. He believed that social change could not be achieved merely through religious reform or imitation of upper castes. Instead, Dalits needed education, organization, and political power. His famous slogan, "Educate, Agitate, Organize," became the foundation of Dalit movements in India. Lynch observed that the Jatavs were deeply influenced by Ambedkarite ideology. Rather than following Sanskritization, they adopted a political strategy for mobility. They participated in democratic politics, formed organizations, demanded reservations, and used constitutional safeguards to improve their social position. Ambedkar's ideas gave them confidence and collective identity. The Constitution of India, largely shaped by Ambedkar, became an important instrument of Dalit empowerment. Through Fundamental Rights, abolition of untouchability, reservations in education and employment, and political representation, democracy opened new opportunities for marginalized communities. Dalits increasingly relied on legal and political methods rather than ritual imitation for upward mobility. Lynch's study is highly significant because it demonstrated that Dalit mobility in modern India was mainly political rather than ritualistic. Earlier sociologists believed that lower castes could improve their status through Sanskritization. However, Lynch showed that the Jatavs rejected this approach and instead used democratic institutions, constitutional rights, and political organization as tools of social advancement. The study also highlighted the

transformative role of constitutional democracy in India. Democracy provided Dalits with voting rights, representation, and legal protection, which weakened the authority of the traditional caste hierarchy. Political participation became a powerful means of achieving dignity and equality. Thus, Ambedkar's leadership marked a turning point in the history of Dalit movements. His ideology united Dalits across caste and regional boundaries and inspired them to fight for justice through democratic and constitutional methods. Lynch's analysis remains an important contribution to understanding caste, social mobility, and Dalit politics in modern India.

Elizabeth Elwell and Leela Malik (1974): Leadership as an Adaptive System

Elizabeth Elwell and Leela Malik, in their 1974 work on leadership, introduced an important theoretical perspective by describing leadership as an adaptive action system. Their approach moved beyond the traditional idea that leadership depends only on the personal qualities or charisma of an individual. Instead, they argued that leadership should be understood scientifically as a dynamic process shaped by social conditions and organizational needs. Their study focused on leadership models, leadership behavior, organizational adaptation, and analytical systems of leadership. According to Elwell and Malik, leadership develops in response to changing circumstances. Social problems, institutional challenges, and group expectations influence how leaders emerge and function. Therefore, leadership is not fixed but constantly adapts to new situations. The authors emphasized that leadership must be studied systematically through sociological and organizational analysis. They believed that effective leadership depends on the interaction between leaders, followers, and the social environment. This perspective shifted attention from individual personalities to broader systems, structures, and processes. In the context of Dalit leadership, this theory is highly relevant. Dalit leaders emerged as adaptive responses to caste oppression, social exclusion, and political marginalization. Democratic institutions, constitutional rights, education, and political opportunities created conditions for new forms of Dalit leadership. Leaders such as B. R. Ambedkar adapted their strategies according to the social realities of inequality and discrimination. Thus, Elwell and Malik's theory contributed significantly to leadership studies by explaining leadership as a social and adaptive process rather than merely an individual trait.

Carter A.T. (1975): Elite Politics in Rural Maharashtra

A. T. Carter, in his 1975 study on elite politics in rural Maharashtra, examined the nature of political stratification and leadership in village society. His research highlighted how political

power in Maharashtra remained concentrated in the hands of privileged and dominant castes even after Indian independence. Carter observed that caste status and economic power played a major role in determining political leadership. Wealthy landowning castes controlled local political institutions, cooperatives, and decision-making processes. Political influence was closely linked with ownership of land, social prestige, and access to economic resources. As a result, rural leadership structures were highly unequal. The study also explained the existence of vertical alliances between elite groups and the rural masses. Dominant caste leaders maintained support from lower social groups through patron-client relationships, political dependency, and economic control. Although democratic institutions expanded after independence, real political authority continued to remain with upper-caste and economically powerful groups. Carter concluded that the political system of Maharashtra was largely dominated by socially privileged elites. Marginalized communities, especially Dalits, faced serious obstacles in entering positions of leadership and political power. This research is important because it reveals the structural barriers faced by Dalits in accessing political representation. Political inequality was not simply due to lack of participation but was deeply rooted in caste hierarchy and economic inequality. Therefore, Dalit leadership did not emerge naturally within the existing political system. Instead, it developed through continuous struggle, political mobilization, social movements, and demands for democratic rights and representation. Carter's study remains significant for understanding caste-based inequality and power relations in rural Indian politics.

Ghanshyam Shah (1975): Politics of Scheduled Castes and Tribes

Ghanshyam Shah, in his 1975 study on the politics of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in Gujarat, examined the nature of political participation among marginalized communities in post-independence India. His work is important for understanding the changing political position of weaker sections within democratic institutions. Shah found that Adivasi leaders were politically more advanced and organized than Scheduled Caste leaders in certain regions of Gujarat. Tribal communities had developed stronger political mobilization and leadership structures, while Scheduled Castes still faced greater social discrimination and political limitations. One of the major observations of the study was the increasing participation of weaker sections in democratic politics after independence. Constitutional safeguards, reservations, elections, and local self-government institutions encouraged greater involvement of Scheduled Castes and Scheduled Tribes in political processes. According to Shah, democratic institutions helped reduce some social and political inequalities between caste

Hindus and disadvantaged communities. However, Shah also identified an important problem within emerging leadership patterns. He observed a growing gap between political leaders and ordinary members of marginalized communities. Some leaders achieved political success, gained positions of power, and became part of the political elite, but gradually became socially distant from the masses they represented. This disconnect created concerns about whether leaders truly reflected the everyday struggles and aspirations of their communities. Shah's findings later became highly influential in studies of Dalit elites and political representation. His research highlighted that political participation alone was not sufficient unless leaders remained accountable and connected to the social realities of marginalized groups. Thus, Shah's study contributed significantly to understanding caste, democracy, and leadership in modern India.

"यशवंतराव चव्हाण स्मृति सदन का भ्रमण करते हुए एवं उनके प्रेरणादायी व्यक्तित्व को नमन करते हुए।"

Sacchidananda (1977): The Harijan Elite

Sacchidananda's study The Harijan Elite (1977) is an important sociological contribution to the understanding of social mobility and leadership among Scheduled Castes in India. The study examined the rise of a new educated and politically active Dalit elite after independence.

Sacchidananda focused mainly on legislators, civil servants, teachers, professionals, and social workers who had achieved higher social and economic positions through education, government employment, and political participation. One of the major findings of the study was that the economic condition of elite Scheduled Caste members was significantly better than that of ordinary Dalits. Government jobs, political positions, and access to education helped these individuals improve their living standards and social status. The study showed that education was the most important factor in the formation of this new elite class. Access to schools, colleges, scholarships, and reservation policies enabled many Dalits to enter professional and administrative fields. Another important finding was the growth of political consciousness among the Dalit elite. These elites became aware of constitutional rights, social justice, and democratic participation. Many actively participated in politics, social movements, and welfare organizations. Elite networks also played an important role in promoting mobility. Connections with political leaders, officials, and educated groups created opportunities for employment and influence. Sacchidananda also observed that many elite individuals worked for the upliftment of their communities. They encouraged education, social reform, and political awareness among other Dalits. Some became role models who inspired younger generations to pursue education and government service. However, the study also presented a critical perspective. Sacchidananda noted that some members of the elite gradually became socially distant from ordinary Dalits after achieving upward mobility. They often adopted middle-class lifestyles and reduced their involvement with caste-based community issues. This created a gap between elite Dalits and poorer members of the community. The study raised an important sociological question: whether marginalized elites continue to represent their communities after achieving higher status. This debate remains highly relevant in contemporary Dalit politics and discussions on representation, leadership, and social justice in India.

Abbasayulu Y.B. (1978): Scheduled Caste Elite in Andhra Pradesh

Abbasayulu Y.B.'s study Scheduled Caste Elite in Andhra Pradesh (1978) is an important sociological analysis of the emergence of Dalit elites in post-independence India. The study focused on political, intellectual, and administrative elites among Scheduled Castes in Andhra Pradesh and examined the factors responsible for their upward mobility and leadership development. One of the major findings of the study was that education played the most significant role in the rise of Scheduled Caste elites. Access to schools, colleges, higher education, scholarships, and reservation policies enabled many Dalits to secure government

jobs and professional positions. Education not only improved their economic condition but also increased their social prestige and political awareness. Abbasayulu argued that educational achievement became the foundation for the emergence of a new educated Dalit middle class. The study also highlighted the growth of occupational mobility among Scheduled Castes. Traditionally, Dalits were confined to hereditary and low-status occupations because of the caste system. However, modernization, urbanization, and constitutional safeguards opened opportunities in administration, teaching, politics, and other professional sectors. Many Scheduled Caste individuals moved from traditional caste-based occupations into white-collar employment and government service. Another important contribution of the study was its analysis of elite interaction. Abbasayulu observed that Dalit elites increasingly interacted with upper-caste elites in political, educational, and administrative institutions. These interactions helped them gain access to resources, influence, and opportunities. Elite networks became important mechanisms for social mobility, employment, and political advancement. Through institutional connections and social contacts, Dalit elites were able to strengthen their social position within society. The study demonstrated how institutional access and education transformed the status of Scheduled Castes in modern India. It showed that constitutional democracy and state policies created new avenues for leadership and mobility among marginalized communities. However, the study also faced criticism. Scholars argued that Abbasayulu grouped political, intellectual, and administrative elites together without giving sufficient attention to political leadership specifically. As a result, the study did not deeply analyze the distinct role of Dalit political leaders in social transformation and caste politics. Despite this limitation, Abbasayulu's work remains important because it emphasized the central role of education, institutional opportunities, and elite networks in the emergence of Dalit leadership and social mobility in India.

Mumtaz Ali Khan (1980): Leadership in Bangalore Villages

Mumtaz Ali Khan's study on leadership in the villages of Bangalore district (1980) examined rural power structures and the condition of Scheduled Caste leadership in village society. The study focused on how social change, migration, and political participation influenced the leadership patterns among Dalits in rural Karnataka. One of the major arguments of the study was that Scheduled Castes lacked strong and effective leadership in villages. Khan identified several reasons for this weakness. First, many educated Dalits migrated from villages to towns and cities in search of employment, education, and better living conditions. As a result, rural

communities lost educated individuals who could have emerged as leaders and representatives of Dalit interests. Second, Khan observed that elite Dalits who achieved economic or educational advancement often became less interested in village affairs. After attaining upward mobility, many preferred urban lifestyles and distanced themselves from rural caste problems. This created a leadership vacuum in villages where ordinary Dalits continued to face poverty, discrimination, and social exclusion. Third, the study found that traditional leaders among Scheduled Castes had become passive and ineffective. They lacked the resources, political influence, and organizational capacity needed to challenge dominant caste power structures. Consequently, rural Dalits often remained politically weak and poorly organized. Khan also highlighted the gap between political promises and actual performance. Political leaders frequently spoke about social justice and welfare for Scheduled Castes, but the implementation of these promises remained limited. Many rural Dalits did not receive adequate benefits from government schemes because of weak leadership and lack of political awareness. However, the study noted that local Panchayat members and a few middle-aged activists played constructive roles in helping Scheduled Castes access welfare schemes and government support. These grassroots leaders acted as intermediaries between the state and marginalized communities. Overall, the study reflected the rural-urban divide in Dalit leadership. While urban Dalits experienced greater mobility and opportunities, rural Scheduled Castes often remained politically weak due to migration, poor organization, and ineffective leadership structures.

Chaudhary D.S. (1981): Emerging Rural Leadership

Chaudhary D.S. (1981) studied the Panchayati Raj system and the changing nature of rural leadership in India. His research focused on how democratic decentralization influenced political participation and leadership patterns in villages after independence. The study examined whether Panchayati Raj institutions had succeeded in creating equal opportunities for all social groups, especially marginalized communities. One of the major findings of the study was that rural leadership patterns were gradually changing. Traditional hereditary leadership was weakening, and younger as well as educated individuals were emerging in village politics. Education, political awareness, and participation in local institutions enabled new leaders to enter the political sphere. This reflected the growing influence of democracy and modernization in rural India. However, Chaudhary observed that despite these changes, real political power at the grassroots level largely remained in the hands of upper castes and economically dominant groups. Wealth, land ownership, caste status, and social prestige

continued to play a major role in determining leadership positions. Even within democratic institutions, socially powerful groups controlled decision-making processes and local administration. The study argued that genuine democratization had not fully occurred because village power structures remained unequal. Although constitutional democracy expanded voting rights and political participation, social hierarchies still influenced leadership selection and governance. Marginalized groups often faced difficulties in exercising independent political power due to caste domination and economic dependence. This research is important because it highlights the contradiction between democratic ideals and social reality in rural India. While democratic institutions promoted participation and representation, traditional social inequalities continued to shape local politics. Chaudhary's study therefore demonstrated that political democracy alone could not ensure social equality unless deeper structural inequalities within rural society were addressed.

Barbara Joshi (1982): Democracy and Equality

Barbara Joshi's study Democracy and Equality (1982) examined the relationship between untouchable politics, democratic participation, and social change in India. Her research focused on the role of Scheduled Caste legislators and the impact of constitutional safeguards on political representation and welfare policies. One of the major findings of the study was that Scheduled Caste legislators played an important role in supporting welfare-oriented policies and social justice measures. Through legislative participation, Dalit representatives contributed to debates on education, employment, reservations, and social welfare schemes aimed at improving the conditions of marginalized communities. Joshi argued that minority lawmakers helped bring issues of caste discrimination and inequality into democratic institutions. The study also highlighted the importance of reserved constituencies in increasing political participation among Scheduled Castes. Reservation policies enabled Dalits to enter legislative bodies and gain representation in political decision-making processes. Another significant observation was that the educational qualifications of Dalit legislators improved over time. Educated representatives became more active in governance, administration, and policy discussions, reflecting the broader impact of education and modernization. However, Barbara Joshi also pointed out important inequalities within Dalit representation itself. Urban and educated elites dominated Scheduled Caste political representation, while agricultural laborers and poorer rural Dalits remained underrepresented. This created an imbalance in leadership, where only certain sections of the community benefited from political opportunities and reservations. The study further observed that women's participation in Dalit

politics remained extremely low. Despite constitutional democracy, gender inequality continued to limit women's political representation and leadership roles within Scheduled Castes. Overall, the study demonstrated that political representation alone does not automatically produce social equality. Although democratic institutions created opportunities for marginalized groups, the benefits of representation were unevenly distributed. Barbara Joshi's work therefore highlighted the need to address internal inequalities within Dalit communities along with broader caste-based discrimination in Indian society.

Sharma P.D. (1984): Legislative Elite in Haryana

Sharma P.D.'s study Legislative Elite in Haryana (1984) examined the nature of political leadership within the Haryana Vidhan Sabha. The research focused on understanding how political leaders emerge, develop, and function within democratic legislative institutions. Although the study was not specifically centered on Dalit leadership, it provided important insights into the broader process of political leadership formation in India. One of the key areas analyzed in the study was political socialization. Sharma argued that political attitudes, values, and leadership qualities are shaped through family background, education, social environment, and political experience. Leaders do not emerge suddenly; rather, they are gradually influenced by social institutions, political parties, and public life. Political socialization therefore plays a crucial role in preparing individuals for leadership positions. The study also examined legislative behavior and the functioning of elected representatives within the Vidhan Sabha. Sharma observed that legislators' participation in debates, policy discussions, and decision-making processes significantly influenced governance and public policy. Legislative institutions acted as training grounds where leaders gained administrative knowledge, political skills, and practical experience. Another important contribution of the study was its analysis of leadership formation and political participation. Sharma emphasized that political experience, organizational involvement, and interaction with party structures helped shape effective leadership. Senior leaders often gained influence through long-term participation in politics and public service. The research further highlighted how legislative institutions influence political attitudes and policymaking. Through debates, committees, and lawmaking processes, legislators developed broader perspectives on governance, democracy, and public welfare. Although the study did not directly focus on Scheduled Castes or Dalit politics, it remains significant for understanding leadership within democratic institutions. It helps explain how political elites are formed and how democratic systems shape leadership behavior, representation, and policymaking in Indian politics.

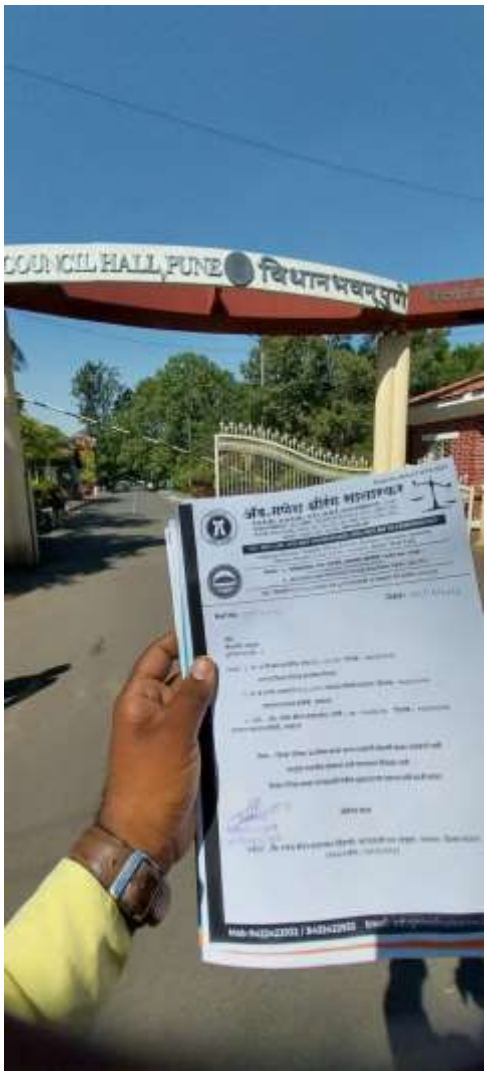
Dharam Raj Singh (1985): Rural Leadership among Scheduled Castes

Dharam Raj Singh's study Rural Leadership among Scheduled Castes (1985) examined the characteristics and development of emerging Dalit leadership in rural India. The research focused on understanding the social background, political orientation, and leadership patterns of Scheduled Caste leaders at the village level. The study found that most emerging rural leaders among Scheduled Castes were young and educated. Education played an important role in increasing political awareness, confidence, and participation in local governance. These leaders were more active in Panchayati Raj institutions, community organizations, and local political activities compared to older generations. Another important finding was that many leaders came from numerically dominant Scheduled Caste groups within their regions. Numerical strength helped these groups gain greater political influence and representation in local politics. The study also observed that the leaders showed strong political interest and actively participated in elections, campaigns, and welfare-related activities. However, Dharam Raj Singh noted that many leaders mainly identified with individuals and groups that supported them politically. Their leadership was often dependent on patron-client relationships, where political support, protection, and resources were exchanged for loyalty. This sometimes limited independent leadership and broader community representation. The study highlighted the importance of social and political support networks in the advancement of Dalit leadership. It demonstrated that leadership development in rural areas depended not only on education and political participation but also on alliances, community backing, and local power relations.

Dharam Raj Singh (1985): Rural Leadership among Scheduled Castes

Dharam Raj Singh's study Rural Leadership among Scheduled Castes (1985) examined the rise of Dalit leadership in rural India and analyzed the social and political background of emerging leaders. The study focused on leadership patterns at the village level and the factors influencing political participation among Scheduled Castes. The research found that most emerging Dalit leaders were young and educated. Education played a major role in developing political awareness, self-confidence, and participation in local governance. These leaders became more active in Panchayati Raj institutions, elections, and community organizations compared to earlier generations. Another important finding was that many leaders belonged to numerically dominant Scheduled Caste groups in their regions. Their larger population strength helped them gain political influence and better representation in village politics. The study also showed that these leaders had a strong interest in politics and actively participated

in campaigns and welfare activities. However, Dharam Raj Singh observed that many leaders were closely associated with individuals and groups that provided them political support. Their leadership often depended on patron-client relationships, where loyalty was exchanged for political protection, resources, and opportunities. This sometimes limited independent leadership and reduced wider community representation. The study highlighted that Dalit leadership in rural areas depended not only on education and political participation but also on social alliances, support networks, and local power structures.



"महाराष्ट्र विधान परिषद, पुणे में मराठा आरक्षण की मांग को लेकर माननीय सदस्यों को निवेदन प्रस्तुत करते हुए।"

Singh and Sundaram (1987): Emerging Harijan Elite

Singh and Sundaram's study Emerging Harijan Elite (1987) examined the rise of educated Dalit elites in Uttar Pradesh, particularly among teachers and lower-level government officials. The study focused on how education, government employment, and constitutional safeguards contributed to social mobility among Scheduled Castes. The research found that Dalit elites generally maintained close ties with their caste communities. Many encouraged education, social awareness, and upward mobility among other caste members. They often acted as role models and motivated younger generations to pursue schooling and government employment. Constitutional concessions such as reservations in education and jobs played a major role in facilitating this mobility and creating a new Dalit middle class. The study also observed that many educated Dalits adopted certain lifestyles, values, and consumption patterns associated with dominant castes and the urban middle class. However, despite their educational and economic advancement, upper castes did not fully accept them socially. Caste prejudice and discrimination continued to influence social relations. This situation created a condition of alienation. Educated Dalits gradually became socially distant from their original communities because of their new status and lifestyle, yet they were still not fully accepted by upper-caste groups. As a result, they often experienced psychological and cultural tension between traditional identity and modern aspirations. The study highlighted the complex social and emotional challenges associated with Dalit social mobility in Indian society.

Eleanor Zelliot (1986): Mahar Movement and Buddhism

Eleanor Zelliot made a major contribution to the study of Dalit movements through her research on the Mahars of Maharashtra and their political as well as religious transformation. Her work focused on the rise of political consciousness among the Mahar community under the influence of B. R. Ambedkar and the spread of the Ambedkarite movement.Zelliot highlighted how the Mahars rejected the traditional caste hierarchy and actively challenged untouchability and social discrimination. Under Ambedkar's leadership, the community became politically mobilized and participated in organized social and political movements. The study showed that Mahars developed political awareness through education, activism, public meetings, and participation in democratic institutions. They gradually acquired political skills and became integrated into modern democratic political culture. An important aspect of Zelliot's study was the analysis of the Buddhist conversion movement. She explained that conversion to Buddhism was not only a religious act but also a social and psychological revolution. By embracing Buddhism, Dalits rejected the caste-based inequalities associated with Hindu society and adopted a new egalitarian identity. The movement provided Dalits with self-respect, dignity, and freedom from caste stigma. Zelliot emphasized that the conversion movement created a deep psychological transformation among Dalits. Buddhism gave them a sense of collective identity, confidence, and social empowerment. It also strengthened community solidarity and encouraged further participation in education, politics, and social reform. The study is considered foundational for understanding Dalit assertion in Maharashtra because it connected religion, politics, identity, and social change. Zelliot's work demonstrated how Ambedkarite ideology and Buddhism became powerful instruments of resistance, self-respect, and political empowerment among Dalits in modern India.

Vijay Kumar (1989): Scheduled Caste Panchayat Leadership

Vijay Kumar's study Scheduled Caste Panchayat Leadership (1989) examined the role of Dalit leaders in Panchayati Raj institutions in western Uttar Pradesh. The research focused on political socialization, leadership recruitment, election participation, and the functioning of Scheduled Caste representatives in village Panchayats. The study is important for understanding how grassroots democracy contributed to the political empowerment of marginalized communities. One of the major findings of the study was that Dalit leaders performed effectively in Panchayat institutions. Many representatives actively participated in local governance, welfare activities, and decision-making processes related to village development. Their involvement helped increase the political visibility of Scheduled Castes at

the grassroots level. The study also found that younger generations played an important role in encouraging political participation among Dalits. Educated youth showed greater political awareness and interest in democratic institutions. They motivated community members to participate in elections, demand rights, and engage in local governance. Another important contribution of the study was its emphasis on the empowering role of Panchayati Raj institutions. Panchayats provided Dalits with opportunities to enter politics, gain leadership experience, and influence local administration. Through democratic participation, marginalized groups developed confidence and a stronger sense of citizenship. Vijay Kumar also observed the influence of B. R. Ambedkar on Dalit political consciousness. Ambedkar's ideas of equality, self-respect, and constitutional rights inspired self-assertion among Dalit leaders and encouraged active participation in democratic processes. The study further noted that Dalits strategically used caste alliances during elections and political negotiations to strengthen their position in local politics. Such alliances helped them secure representation and political support. Overall, the study demonstrated that local democracy and Panchayati Raj institutions played a crucial role in empowering Scheduled Castes and transforming their social and political consciousness in rural India

Parvathamma C. (1989): Scheduled Castes at the Crossroads

Parvathamma C. critically examined the nature of Dalit leadership and social mobility in her study Scheduled Castes at the Crossroads (1989). She argued that the rise of educated and economically advanced Dalit leaders had created internal divisions within Scheduled Caste communities. According to her, many Dalit leaders became increasingly self-centered after achieving upward mobility and often neglected the interests of poorer Dalits. Parvathamma observed that some elite Dalits began to behave like dominant caste groups by exercising authority, controlling resources, and distancing themselves from marginalized sections of their own communities. Instead of promoting collective upliftment, certain leaders focused mainly on personal advancement and political influence. She described this phenomenon as the emergence of "classes over Dalit masses," where a small elite group gained power while ordinary Dalits remained socially and economically disadvantaged. The study highlighted the problem of internal stratification within Dalit society. It showed that social mobility and reservation benefits were not equally distributed among all Dalits. A new educated and politically influential elite class had emerged, creating inequalities even within oppressed communities. Parvathamma's work therefore raised important questions about representation, leadership accountability, and the social responsibilities of upwardly mobile Dalit elites.

Lata Murugkar (1991): Dalit Panther Movement

Lata Murugkar studied the Dalit Panther movement of Maharashtra, which emerged in 1972 as a radical youth movement inspired partly by the Black Panther Party. The movement represented a new phase of militant Dalit politics and cultural assertion. Murugkar identified several important characteristics of the movement, including militant activism, youth leadership, literary activism, anti-caste ideology, and cultural resistance. Dalit Panthers strongly challenged caste oppression, social discrimination, and state neglect through protests, writings, poetry, and public mobilization. The study argued that the movement emerged spontaneously and initially lacked a clear ideological structure. Internal conflicts, adhoc leadership, and organizational weaknesses gradually weakened the movement. Despite these limitations, the Dalit Panther movement had great symbolic importance in modern Dalit politics. It revived Dalit pride, political militancy, cultural assertion, and radical anti-caste consciousness. The movement inspired a new generation of Dalit youth to challenge caste oppression openly and contributed significantly to the growth of Ambedkarite politics and Dalit literature in Maharashtra.

Gokhale J. (1993): Mahar Political Movement

Gokhale J. analyzed the political history of the Mahar movement in Maharashtra and its contribution to Dalit politics in modern India. The study examined major phases of the movement, including social reform activities, B. R. Ambedkar's satyagrahas, the formation of political parties, the Buddhist conversion movement, and the rise of Dalit literature. Gokhale argued that the political emergence of Dalits was one of the most significant developments in modern Indian democracy. Under Ambedkar's leadership, the Mahars developed political consciousness, organized protests against caste discrimination, and demanded equal rights and representation. The movement expanded beyond social reform and became a broader struggle for dignity, justice, and political power. The study also highlighted the importance of Buddhist conversion and Dalit literary movements in strengthening Dalit identity and cultural assertion. Literature, political activism, and religion together helped create a strong anti-caste consciousness among Dalits in Maharashtra. However, Gokhale identified several weaknesses within the movement. The movement failed to build strong rural organizational networks, which limited its reach among village Dalits. He also noted fragmentation among leaders and internal conflicts within the Republican Party of India. These divisions weakened political

unity and reduced the effectiveness of Dalit political mobilization. Overall, the study demonstrated both the achievements and limitations of Dalit political movements in India.

Contursi Janet (1993): Political Theology and Dalit Panthers

Janet Contursi studied the ideological foundations of the Dalit Panther movement in Maharashtra. Her work focused on how the movement combined different political and religious ideas to challenge caste oppression and social inequality. Contursi explained that the Dalit Panthers drew inspiration from Buddhism, Marxism, and democratic socialism. Buddhism provided ethical and spiritual foundations based on equality and human dignity, while Marxism contributed ideas of class struggle and resistance against exploitation. Democratic socialism influenced the movement's commitment to social justice and democratic rights. The study examined political writings, ideological debates, religious symbols, and movement practices. Contursi showed that the Dalit Panthers created a unique ideological framework that linked religion, politics, and cultural resistance. This work is important because it demonstrates how Dalit movements developed alternative intellectual and political traditions to oppose caste domination. It also highlights the role of ideology and symbolism in shaping radical anti-caste movements in modern India.

Gail Omvedt (1994): Dalit and Democratic Revolution

Gail Omvedt produced one of the most influential studies on Dalit politics and social movements in her work Dalit and Democratic Revolution *(1994).* She examined Dalit movements across India during the colonial period and analyzed their role in democratic transformation and struggles against caste oppression. A major contribution of Omvedt's study was her classification of Dalit movements into two broad categories. The first category was anti-systemic or value-based movements, which directly challenged the caste system and Brahmanical social order. These movements demanded radical social transformation and equality. Examples included the B. R. Ambedkar movement, the Adi Hindu movement, the Adi Andhra movement, and the Adi Dravida movement. According to Omvedt, these movements aimed not merely at reform but at restructuring society itself. The second category was reformist movements, which sought improvement within the existing social and political framework rather than complete structural change. Examples included the politics of Jagjivan Ram and Dalit organizations associated with the Hindu Mahasabha. These groups focused more on gradual reform and accommodation within mainstream politics. Omvedt described Ambedkar as the central ideological figure in Dalit politics. She argued that Ambedkarism

continued to shape Dalit movements across India through its emphasis on equality, constitutional rights, social justice, and human dignity. The study also highlighted the ideological conflict between Mahatma Gandhi and Ambedkar regarding caste and untouchability. While Gandhi advocated reform within Hindu society, Ambedkar demanded the complete annihilation of caste. This work is significant because it placed Dalit movements within broader democratic and revolutionary struggles. Omvedt showed that Dalit politics was not only a fight against untouchability but also a movement for social democracy, equality, and human liberation in modern India.

Kshirsagar R.K. (1994): Dalit Movement and Leaders

R. K. Kshirsagar documented the history of Dalit movements and leadership in India between 1857 and 1956. His work is considered an important contribution to the study of Dalit history because it systematically traced the development of anti-caste struggles, political mobilization, and social reform movements during both colonial and early post-colonial periods. The book extensively used primary sources such as speeches, official records, historical documents, newspapers, and writings of Dalit leaders. This gave the study strong historical authenticity and scholarly value. Kshirsagar also presented detailed biographies of important Dalit leaders, including B. R. Ambedkar and other reformers who contributed to the struggle against untouchability and caste oppression. Another major contribution of the study was its analysis of movement strategies adopted by Dalit organizations and leaders. The work examined methods such as political mobilization, education, social reform, protests, satyagrahas, and constitutional demands. It documented how Dalit movements gradually developed from localized reform efforts into organized political struggles for equality and representation. The study serves as an important reference source for scholars because it provides historical documentation of major events, leaders, organizations, and ideological developments in Dalit politics and social movements.

Mendelsohn and Vicziany (1998): The Untouchables Oliver Mendelsohn and Marika Vicziany produced one of the landmark studies on Dalits in their book The Untouchables

The study examined Dalits as a social, economic, and political category within Indian society. The authors analyzed issues such as historical oppression, poverty, reservation policies, caste discrimination, Dalit atrocities, and political movements. One important contribution of the study was its classification of atrocities against Dalits into two categories: traditional caste violence and violence resulting from Dalit resistance. The authors argued that many modern

atrocities occurred because dominant castes reacted violently to growing Dalit assertion and demands for equality. The study also traced the development of reservation policies from the princely state of Kolhapur to independent India. The authors emphasized that compensatory discrimination and reservations created important opportunities for education, employment, and political participation, but these measures alone were insufficient to eliminate deep social inequalities. This work is significant because it combines historical, sociological, and political analysis to provide a comprehensive understanding of Dalit experiences and struggles in modern India.

Vivek Kumar (2002): Dalit Leadership in India

Vivek Kumar made an important contribution to the study of Dalit politics through his work Dalit Leadership in India. The study specifically focused on the origin, growth, development, and transformation of Dalit leadership in India. Vivek Kumar examined leadership patterns, mobilization strategies, political empowerment, and the rise of Dalit assertion in modern democratic politics. The study divided the evolution of Dalit leadership into three major phases. The first phase included pre-Ambedkar movements such as the Adi movements and the Mahar movement, which focused on social reform, identity formation, and resistance to caste discrimination. These early movements laid the foundation for organized Dalit consciousness. The second phase centered on B. R. Ambedkar and Ambedkarite leadership. This period emphasized social reform, political mobilization, constitutional rights, education, and religious transformation through conversion to Buddhism. Ambedkarite leadership created a strong ideological framework for Dalit assertion and democratic participation. The third phase dealt with post-independence Dalit political leadership, where Dalits increasingly participated in electoral politics, political parties, and democratic institutions. Vivek Kumar also classified Dalit leadership into two broad categories: socio-religious leadership and political leadership. Political leadership was further divided into dependent leadership and independent leadership. Dependent leadership relied on mainstream political parties and dominant groups, while independent leadership aimed to build autonomous Dalit political power. A major argument of the study was that Dalit leadership gradually evolved from persuasion and reform-oriented approaches to assertive confrontation against caste oppression and inequality. The study also identified several challenges facing Dalit politics, including factionalism, lack of pan-Indian unity, weak political alliances, and limited structural transformation in society. This work is highly significant because it systematically theorized

Dalit leadership and provided a comprehensive framework for understanding the evolution of Dalit political movements in India.

Peter G. Northouse (2008): Leadership Theory and Practice

Peter G. Northouse examined major modern theories of leadership and their practical applications in his influential book Leadership: Theory and Practice The work is widely used in sociology, political science, management, and organizational studies for understanding the nature of leadership and leadership development. Northouse discussed several important leadership theories, including trait theories, the skills approach, behavioral theories, situational leadership, and transformational leadership. Trait theories focused on the personal qualities and characteristics that make individuals effective leaders, such as confidence, intelligence, determination, and integrity. Behavioral theories emphasized leadership styles and actions rather than inherited traits. An important contribution of the book was the skills approach to leadership. According to Northouse, effective leadership depends on three major skills: technical skills, human skills, and conceptual skills. Technical skills refer to knowledge and competence in specific tasks or activities. Human skills involve communication, cooperation, empathy, and the ability to work effectively with people. Conceptual skills refer to the ability to think strategically, analyze problems, and develop long-term goals and visions. Northouse also explained situational leadership, which argues that leaders must adapt their style according to changing circumstances and followers' needs. Transformational leadership was described as a process through which leaders inspire and motivate people toward collective goals and social change. This theoretical framework is useful for understanding Dalit leadership in India. Effective Dalit leaders often combine organizational ability, communication skills, political awareness, and ideological commitment in their struggle for social justice and empowerment. The skills approach especially helps explain how leadership is developed through education, experience, and social interaction rather than inherited social status alone.

Sumita Mishra (2016): Leadership and Politics in Rural India

Sumita Mishra examined changing leadership patterns and political processes in rural India in her study Leadership and Politics in Rural India. The research focused on the transformation of rural political culture under the influence of decentralization, democratic participation, and community development programs. The study analyzed the role of Panchayati Raj institutions, local governance, and rural political participation in shaping new forms of leadership. Mishra

argued that rural India was experiencing significant political and social changes because of expanding education, increased political awareness, government welfare schemes, and democratic decentralization. These developments created opportunities for broader participation among marginalized groups, women, youth, and weaker sections of society. One of the major arguments of the study was that rural India increasingly required young and energetic leadership capable of responding to modern developmental challenges. According to Mishra, younger leaders were generally more educated, politically aware, and open to democratic values compared to traditional village elites. Such leadership was seen as important for promoting transparency, accountability, and effective governance at the grassroots level. The study also emphasized democratic accountability in local politics. Mishra argued that elected representatives in villages needed to remain answerable to the people and actively participate in community welfare and development activities. Democratic participation was considered essential for strengthening local self-governance and empowering rural communities. Another important aspect of the study was its focus on rural political transformation. Traditional power structures based on caste, wealth, and hereditary influence were gradually being challenged by new democratic processes and changing social conditions. However, the study also recognized that inequalities and dominant social structures still influenced rural politics. Overall, Mishra's work reflects the continuing transformation of rural political culture in India and highlights the growing importance of youth participation, decentralization, and democratic leadership in strengthening grassroots democracy.

Kamble, B. (2018). Politics of Scheduled Castes in the election of Maharashtra Vidhan Sabha. International Journal of Research and Analytical Reviews, *5*(4), 364–373. The research paper titled "Politics of Scheduled Castes in the Election of Maharashtra Vidhan Sabha" by Dr. Bal Kamble provides a detailed analysis of the political participation and representation of Scheduled Castes (SCs) in Maharashtra Assembly elections from 1962 to 2004. The paper highlights the contribution of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar in initiating Dalit political consciousness and electoral participation in Maharashtra. The study mainly focuses on the number of SC MLAs elected from reserved constituencies, their regional distribution, and party-wise representation across different Vidhan Sabha elections. The author systematically examines elections from 1962 onwards and presents statistical tables showing how SC political representation changed over time. Western Maharashtra emerged as the region with the highest number of SC MLAs, followed by Marathwada and Vidarbha. One of the

important findings of the paper is that the Congress Party dominated SC politics for several decades. Out of 188 SC MLAs elected during the period studied, 111 belonged to the Congress Party. However, after the 1990s, parties such as BJP and Shiv Sena increased their influence among Scheduled Caste voters and representatives. The paper also shows that only a few SC candidates were elected from general constituencies, indicating limitations in broader political acceptance beyond reserved seats. The article is valuable because it combines electoral statistics with political analysis. The tables and regional comparisons make the research systematic and informative. The author successfully demonstrates how reservation policies shaped Dalit political participation in Maharashtra. The paper also reflects the gradual diversification of SC political leadership from Congress dominance to multi-party representation. However, the paper has certain limitations. It mainly relies on quantitative electoral data and gives less attention to qualitative aspects such as the socio-economic conditions of SC leaders, voter behavior, and grassroots political movements. Some language and grammatical errors are also noticeable in the paper. Despite these limitations, the study remains an important contribution to understanding Dalit politics and democratic representation in Maharashtra.

Narender Kumar and Manoj Raj (2020): Dalit Leadership in Panchayats Raj institutions after the implementation of the 73rd Constitutional Amendment. Their study focused on four Indian states and analyzed the experiences, challenges, and political roles of Dalit Panchayat leaders within local self-governance institutions. The research highlighted several enabling factors that strengthened Dalit leadership at the grassroots level. Education was identified as one of the most important factors because it increased political awareness, administrative understanding, and confidence among Dalit representatives. Economic independence also played a major role, as financially stable leaders were better able to participate independently in politics and resist social pressure. The study further emphasized the importance of family support, community participation, and prior political experience in leadership development. Supportive family environments encouraged political involvement, while active participation within the community helped leaders build trust and legitimacy. Political experience improved decision-making skills and strengthened leadership effectiveness in Panchayat administration. However, the study also identified several inhibiting factors that limited the functioning of Dalit leaders. Caste discrimination and social exclusion continued to affect their authority and participation in local governance. In many villages, dominant caste groups resisted Dalit leadership and attempted to control Panchayat decision-making processes. Such resistance often created obstacles in implementing welfare

programs and exercising political power independently. Despite these challenges, the study concluded that Dalit Panchayat leaders possess significant transformative potential. The authors argued that grassroots leadership can gradually democratize local governance and promote social equality. Through active participation in Panchayati Raj institutions, Dalit leaders contribute to political empowerment, increased representation, and long-term social change in rural India.

Dhaarnekar, A. L., & Maurya, D. K. (2024). Revisiting the Dalit movement in Maharashtra: Strategies, challenges, and legacy. Accent Journal of Economics Ecology & Engineering, *9*(12), 12–15. Accent Journal of Economics Ecology & Engineering The article "Revisiting the Dalit Movement in Maharashtra: Strategies, Challenges, and Legacy" examines the historical development and social significance of the Dalit movement in Maharashtra under the leadership of B. R. Ambedkar. The study highlights how the movement challenged caste-based discrimination and promoted social justice, equality, education, and political representation for marginalized communities. The authors discuss Ambedkar's ideological vision, organizational strategies, and efforts toward economic empowerment and constitutional rights. The article also explains the major challenges faced by Dalits, including social oppression, violence, lack of resources, and internal divisions within the community. Furthermore, it evaluates the long-term impact of the movement on Indian democracy, constitutional safeguards, reservation policies, and contemporary Dalit activism. Overall, the article presents the Dalit movement as a transformative force that reshaped modern Indian society and inspired ongoing struggles for equality and human dignity.

Sonpimple, U. (2025, August 1). Dynasty and division: The crisis in Dalit politics in Maharashtra. The Indian Express The article "Dynasty and Division: The Crisis in Dalit Politics in Maharashtra" by Upendra Sonpimple examines the current challenges faced by Dalit politics in Maharashtra. The article focuses on the leadership struggle between Prakash Ambedkar and Anandraj Ambedkar, both grandsons of B. R. Ambedkar, who claim to represent the true legacy of Ambedkarite politics. It highlights how dynastic leadership, ideological conflicts, and internal divisions have weakened the unity of Dalit political movements in the state. The article argues that instead of promoting collective social transformation, contemporary Dalit politics is increasingly shaped by personal rivalry and fragmented mobilization. It also raises concerns about the future direction of Dalit leadership and the preservation of Ambedkar's vision of equality, social justice, and democratic

representation. Overall, the article presents a critical analysis of the changing nature of Dalit political identity and leadership in modern Maharashtra.

"महाराष्ट्र के आराध्य दैवत छत्रपति शिवाजी महाराज की रायगढ़ स्थित समाधि का दर्शन करते हुए एवं पुष्पहार अर्पित कर श्रद्धांजलि देते हुए।"

Naravane, A. V. (2026). Evaluation of judicial perspectives of reservation in educational institutions and study of reservation in post graduate education in university departments with special reference to State of Maharashtra (Doctoral dissertation). The study titled Evaluation of Judicial Perspectives of Reservation in Educational Institutions and

Study of Reservation in Post Graduate Education in University Departments with Special Reference to State of Maharashtra examines the constitutional, legal, and judicial dimensions of reservation policies in higher education. The research focuses on how courts in India have interpreted reservation provisions related to Scheduled Castes, Scheduled Tribes, Other Backward Classes, and other socially disadvantaged groups in educational institutions. Special attention is given to postgraduate education in university departments within Maharashtra. The study analyzes important judgments of the Supreme Court of India and High Courts concerning equality, social justice, merit, and affirmative action. It also evaluates the implementation of reservation policies in universities, highlighting administrative challenges, legal conflicts, and policy implications. The research contributes to understanding the relationship between constitutional justice, educational access, and social empowerment in contemporary India.

Present Research Gap Identified In the Literature

The review points out that there is limited research on:

1. Changing nature of Dalit political leadership.
2. Dalit leadership in Maharashtra.
3. Sociological dimensions of leadership transformation.
4. Role of Dalit leaders in solving socio-economic issues.
5. Leadership patterns in Maharashtra.

Sociological Significance of the Literature Review Gap

The reviewed studies are sociologically significant because they explain:

1. The transformation of oppressed communities into political actors.
2. The relationship between caste and power.
3. The role of education in social mobility.
4. The impact of democracy on marginalized groups.
5. The emergence of identity politics.
6. The evolution of Dalit consciousness.
7. The role of social movements in political change.

These studies collectively show that Dalit leadership is not merely a political phenomenon but also a social, cultural, ideological, and psychological transformation. The review of literature on Dalit leadership demonstrates the gradual transformation of Indian democracy and society. From exclusion and untouchability to political participation and leadership, Dalits have undergone a long process of social struggle and empowerment. The studies reviewed in the text collectively show that Dalit leadership evolved through educational advancement, political mobilization, social reform movements, Ambedkarite ideology, reservation policies, and grassroots democratic participation. The emergence of Dalit leadership challenged traditional caste hierarchies and introduced new dimensions of social justice and democratic equality. At the same time, the literature also highlights continuing challenges such as caste discrimination, rural backwardness, internal factionalism, elite detachment, and limited structural transformation. While democratic institutions created opportunities, actual empowerment required sustained social and political struggle. The role of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar emerges as central throughout the literature. His ideas of education, organization, and agitation became the ideological foundation of Dalit political consciousness. Dalit movements such as the Mahar movement, Dalit Panthers, and Buddhist conversion movement further strengthened collective identity and resistance. The literature also reveals the growing importance of Panchayati Raj institutions in grassroots empowerment. Reservations in local governance created opportunities for Dalit participation, although social barriers continue to exist Finally, the review identifies an important research gap regarding the changing nature of Dalit political leadership in Maharashtra, Despite Maharashtra being the center of Ambedkarite politics and Dalit assertion, there is still insufficient sociological research examining contemporary Dalit leadership patterns, organizational structures, ideological changes, and socio-political roles. Therefore, the present area of study becomes highly relevant for understanding how Dalit leadership is evolving in modern India and how it continues to shape the broader democratic process.

महाराष्ट्र राज्य मागासवर्ग आयोग, पुणे
खोली क्र. ३०७, नवीन प्रशासकीय इमारत, तिसरा मजला, विधान भवना समोर, पुणे ४११००१
दूरध्वनी क्रमांक : ०२०-२६०५३०५६, इमेल आयडी :- msbccpune@gmail.com
अॅड.गणेश श्रीरंग मानाजकर

"महाराष्ट्र राज्य मागासवर्ग आयोग के कार्यालय का भ्रमण करते हुए तथा सामाजिक न्याय, आरक्षण और पिछड़े वर्गों के अधिकारों से संबंधित कार्यों की जानकारी प्राप्त करते हुए।"

CHAPTER – III
RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

The present chapter explains the research methodology adopted for the study entitled *"**Rise of Dalit Leadership in Politics of Maharashtra: A Sociological Analysis.**"* Research methodology is an important part of social science research because it provides a systematic framework for collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data related to the research problem. It helps the researcher to conduct the study scientifically, objectively, and systematically. The methodology adopted for the present study is mainly based on the principles of Political Sociology, as the study attempts to understand the interaction between society, caste, politics, leadership, and social change in relation to Dalit communities.

"महात्मा ज्योतिराव फुले के दर्शन कर उन्हें विनम्र अभिवादन करते हुए।"

3.2 Significance of the Study Research

1. The present study is important both academically and socially. It contributes to the understanding of Dalit leadership in a more systematic and detailed way.

2. Firstly, the study provides **new knowledge about Dalit political leadership in Maharashtra**, which is not widely covered in existing research.
3. Secondly, it helps in understanding the **changing nature of leadership**, including social, political, and economic aspects of Dalit leaders in Maharashtra. This will contribute to the field of political sociology.
4. Thirdly, the study highlights the **role of Dalit leaders in social transformation**, showing how leadership can influence equality, justice, and empowerment in society.
5. Fourthly, it is useful for **policy makers and planners** in designing better policies and programs for the development of Dalit communities.
6. Fifthly, the study helps in understanding the **problems and challenges faced by Dalit leaders**, such as lack of unity, political limitations, and socio-economic barriers.
7. Sixthly, it will be beneficial for **students, researchers, and scholars** who are studying caste, politics, and leadership in India.
8. Seventhly, the study contributes to improving **political strategies and leadership approaches** among Dalit leaders for better representation and effectiveness.
9. Finally, the study promotes a better understanding of **social justice, equality, and democratic participation**, which are essential for building an inclusive society.

3.3 Objectives of Research

The major objectives of the present study are as follows:

1. To understand the historical background of Dalit leadership in Maharashtra.
2. To study the socio-economic background of Dalit political leaders in Maharashtra

3.4 Research Design: - The present study is based on a **Descriptive Research Design**.

3.5 Research Gaps in Literature

The review of literature shows that many studies have been conducted on caste, Dalit movements, social mobility, and leadership in India. However, there are several important gaps in the existing research.

1. First, most studies socio-economic background focus on Dalit movements and general leadership patterns, but very few studies specifically analyze **Dalit political leadership in Maharashtra**, especially from a sociological perspective.
2. Second, earlier research mainly discusses historical developments background or individual background leaders, but lacks a detailed study of the **changing nature of Dalit**

leadership in the post-independence period. There is limited work on how leadership has evolved in terms of ideology, strategy, and political participation.

3. Third, there is a lack of research on the **role and perception of Dalit leaders** in addressing socio-economic and political issues of their community. Most studies do not examine how leaders actually function in real political settings.
4. Fourth, previous studies do not adequately focus on **regional analysis**, particularly Maharashtra, where Dalit leadership has played a significant role in politics.
5. Fifth, there is insufficient attention to the **relationship between leaders and followers**, including how leadership influences social change and empowerment.
6. Sixth, many studies highlight leadership at a theoretical level but fail to provide **empirical and field-based analysis** of Dalit political leaders.
7. Seventh, issues such as **fragmentation, internal conflicts, and party-based leadership divisions** are not deeply explored in existing literature.
8. Finally, there is a clear absence of studies that combine **historical, sociological, and political analysis** to understand Dalit leadership in a comprehensive way.

Therefore, the present study attempts to fill these gaps by analyzing the changing nature of Dalit political leadership in Maharashtra.

3.6.1 Data Collection

For the present study, secondary sources of data have been used. The use of both types of data helped the researcher to understand the changing nature of Dalit political leadership from empirical, sociological, political, and historical perspectives. The collected data provided comprehensive information regarding the **A** Sociological -economic Analysis background, political participation, ideological orientation, and activities of Dalit political leaders.

3.6.1.2 Secondary Data

Secondary data refers to the information already collected and published by various institutions, government agencies, researchers, and scholars. For the present study, secondary data were collected from various official and non-official sources to support and supplement the primary data. The secondary sources included records and reports from government departments and institutions such as the Chief Electoral Office, Mumbai; Maharashtra Vidhan Sabha Secretariat, Mumbai; Maharashtra Vidhan Sabha Debates; Election Commission Reports; Planning Commission Reports; and Statistical Abstracts of Maharashtra. These official documents provided valuable information regarding elections, political representation,

demographic data, and policy matters related to Dalit communities and leadership. In addition, secondary data were also collected from books, newspapers, research journals, magazines, articles, clippings, published reports, autobiographies, and websites related to Dalit movements, political leadership, caste politics, and social change in Maharashtra. These sources helped in understanding the historical background, ideological perspectives, organizational developments, and contemporary issues related to Dalit political leadership.

The use of both primary and secondary data enhanced the reliability, validity, and comprehensiveness of the study and enabled the researcher to critically analyze the changing nature of Dalit political leadership from multiple dimensions.

"वढू बुद्रुक स्थित छत्रपति संभाजी महाराज की समाधि का दर्शन करते हुए एवं उनके अद्वितीय शौर्य, बलिदान और राष्ट्रभक्ति को नमन करते हुए।"

3.6.2 .1 Universe of the Study

The universe of the study consists of all Scheduled Caste (SC) reserved Assembly constituencies in Maharashtra. These constituencies were considered important for understanding the nature and dynamics of Dalit political leadership because they provide opportunities for political participation and representation to Scheduled Castes within the democratic political system.

Table No: - 3.6.2.1 Administrative Divisions of Maharashtra State

Sr. No.	Administrative Division	Headquarters	Districts Included
1	Konkan Division	Mumbai	Mumbai City, Mumbai Suburban, Thane, Palghar, Raigad, Ratnagiri, Sindhudurg
2	North Maharashtra Division	Nashik	Nashik, Dhule, Jalgaon, Ahmednagar, Nandurbar
3	West Maharashtra Division	Pune	Pune, Satara, Sangli, Kolhapur, Solapur
4	Marathwada Division	Aurangabad	Aurangabad, Jalna, Beed, Parbhani, Hingoli, Nanded, Latur, Osmanabad
5	Amravati Division	Amravati	Amravati, Akola, Washim, Buldhana, Yavatmal
6	Nagpur Division	Nagpur	Nagpur, Wardha, Bhandara, Gondia, Chandrapur, Gadchiroli

Source :- **https://www.majhishala.in/maharashtra-rajya-sima-region/**

Table No. 3.6.2.2 Political Regions and Districts of Maharashtra Total Administrative Classification of Maharashtra

Particular	Number
Total Administrative Divisions	6
Total Districts in Maharashtra	36

Source :- **https://www.majhishala.in/maharashtra-rajya-sima-region/**

Table No. 3.6.2.2 Region-wise District

Region	Number of Districts
Konkan	7
North Maharashtra	5
West Maharashtra	5
Marathwada	8
Amravati	5
Nagpur	6

Source :- **https://www.majhishala.in/maharashtra-rajya-sima-region/**

1. **Mumbai–Konkan Region**

The Mumbai–Konkan region consists of the following districts:

1. Mumbai City
2. Mumbai Suburban
3. Thane
4. Palghar
5. Raigad
6. Ratnagiri
7. Sindhudurg

2. **North Maharashtra Region**

The North Maharashtra region consists of the following districts:

1. Nashik
2. Dhule
3. Nandurbar
4. Jalgaon
5. Ahmednagar

3. Nagpur Administrative Division

This division includes the following districts:

1. Nagpur
2. Wardha
3. Bhandara
4. Gondia
5. Chandrapur
6. Gadchiroli

4. Amravati Administrative Division

This division includes the following districts:

1. Amravati
2. Akola
3. Yavatmal
4. Buldhana
5. Washim

5. Marathwada Region

The Marathwada region consists of the following districts:

1. Aurangabad
2. Jalna
3. Beed
4. Osmanabad
5. Latur
6. Nanded
7. Parbhani
8. Hingoli

6. Western Maharashtra Region

The Western Maharashtra region consists of the following districts:

1. Pune
2. Satara
3. Sangli
4. Kolhapur
5. Solapur

Thus, all five political regions and their respective districts constitute the study area of the present research for understanding the changing nature of Dalit political leadership in Maharashtra.

Administretive Region-

1. Mumbai–Konkan Region

2. North Maharashtra Region

3.Western Maharashtra Region

4. Marathwada Region

5. Nagpur Division

6. Amravati Region

Reserved Scheduled Caste Constituencies

Reserved constituencies are electoral constituencies set aside for candidates belonging to the Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) to ensure political representation and social justice in the democratic system of India. These reservations are provided under the Constitution of India based on the population of SCs and STs in different regions.

"मेरे पिता जी द्वारा प्रतिवर्ष की भाँति हमारे घर में छत्रपति शिवाजी महाराज जयंती उत्साहपूर्वक एवं श्रद्धापूर्वक मनाते हुए।"

List of SC and ST Reserved Assembly Constituencies in Maharashtra

1.Scheduled Caste (SC) Reserved Constituencies

Bhusawal, Mehkar, Murtizapur, Washim, Daryapur, Umred, Nagpur North, Bhandara, Arjuni-Morgaon, Chandrapur, Umarkhed, Deglur, Badnapur, Aurangabad West, Deolali, Ambernath, Kurla, Dharavi, Pimpri, Pune Cantonment, Shrirampur, Kaij, Udgir, Umarga, Mohol, Malshiras, Hatkanangle, and Miraj are the major Scheduled Caste (SC) reserved Assembly constituencies in Maharashtra.

2. Scheduled Tribe (ST) Reserved Constituencies

Akkalkuwa, Shahada, Nandurbar, Navapur, Sakri, Shirpur, Melghat, Amgaon, Armori, Gadchiroli, Aheri, Ralegaon, Arni, Baglan, Kalwan, Dindori, Igatpuri, Dahanu, Vikramgad, Palghar, Boisar, Bhiwandi Rural, Shahapur, and Akole are the major Scheduled Tribe (ST) reserved Assembly constituencies in Maharashtra.

Table No. 3.3

Reserved Assembly Constituencies for Scheduled Castes

Sr. No.	Constituency	2009	2014	2019	2024
1	Bhusawal (SC)	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	Mehkar (SC)	✓	✓	✓	✓
3	Murtizapur (SC)	✓	✓	✓	✓
4	Washim (SC)	✓	✓	✓	✓
5	Daryapur (SC)	✓	✓	✓	✓
6	Umred (SC)	✓	✓	✓	✓
7	Nagpur North (SC)	✓	✓	✓	✓
8	Bhandara (SC)	✓	✓	✓	✓
9	Arjuni-Morgaon (SC)	✓	✓	✓	✓
10	Chandrapur (SC)	✓	✓	✓	✓
11	Umarkhed (SC)	✓	✓	✓	✓
12	Deglur (SC)	✓	✓	✓	✓
13	Badnapur (SC)	✓	✓	✓	✓
14	Aurangabad West (SC)	✓	✓	✓	✓
15	Devlali / Deolali (SC)	✓	✓	✓	✓
16	Ambernath (SC)	✓	✓	✓	✓
17	Kurla (SC)	✓	✓	✓	✓
18	Dharavi (SC)	✓	✓	✓	✓
19	Pimpri (SC)	✓	✓	✓	✓
20	Pune Cantonment (SC)	✓	✓	✓	✓
21	Shrirampur (SC)	✓	✓	✓	✓
22	Kaij (SC)	✓	✓	✓	✓
23	Udgir (SC)	✓	✓	✓	✓
24	Umarga (SC)	✓	✓	✓	✓
25	Mohol (SC)	✓	✓	✓	✓
26	Malshiras (SC)	✓	✓	✓	✓
27	Phaltan (SC)	✓	✓	✓	✓
28	Hatkanangle (SC)	✓	✓	✓	✓
29	Miraj (SC)	✓	✓	✓	✓

Source: Compiled from Secondary Data such as books, journals, government reports, census records, research articles, newspapers, and official websites.

District	SC Reserved Constituencies	ST Reserved Constituencies

Nandurbar	—	Akkalkuwa, Shahada, Nandurbar, Navapur
Dhule	—	Sakri, Shirpur
Jalgaon	Bhusawal	Chopda
Buldhana	Mehkar	—
Akola	Murtizapur	—
Washim	Washim	—
Amravati	Daryapur	Melghat
Nagpur	Umred, Nagpur North	—
Bhandara	Bhandara	—
Gondia	Arjuni-Morgaon	—
Gadchiroli	—	Amgaon, Armori, Gadchiroli, Aheri
Chandrapur	Chandrapur	—
Yavatmal	Umarkhed	Ralegaon, Arni
Nanded	Deglur	—
Jalna	Badnapur	—
Aurangabad	Aurangabad West	—
Nashik	Deolali	Baglan, Kalwan, Dindori, Igatpuri
Palghar	—	Dahanu, Vikramgad, Palghar, Boisar
Thane	Ambernath	Bhiwandi Rural, Shahapur
Mumbai Suburban	Kurla	—
Mumbai City	Dharavi	—
Pune	Pimpri, Pune Cantonment	—

Ahmednagar	Shrirampur	Akole
Beed	Kaij	—
Latur	Udgir	—
Osmanabad	Umarga	—
Solapur	Mohol, Malshiras	—
Kolhapur	Hatkanangle	—
Sangli	Miraj	—

Source: Maharashtra Assembly Constituencies Reservation List (Election Commission of India [ECI], n.d., https://eci.gov.in/

The total number of Dalit political leaders elected from the reserved Assembly constituencies during the Assembly elections held between 1995 and 2024 was 45. However, among these 45 leaders, 18 leaders were re-elected in different elections. Therefore, the actual number of individual Dalit political leaders was reduced to 27. Out of these 27 Dalit political leaders, 5 leaders had expired at the time of conducting the research. Therefore, the final sample size for the present study consisted of 22 Dalit political leaders (27 – 5 = 22). The present study adopted the census method for sample selection. Accordingly, all the available 22 Dalit political leaders from the reserved constituencies were included in the study. Thus, all the Scheduled Caste reserved Assembly constituency representatives were covered under the present research. The list of Dalit political leaders selected for the study, including the names of deceased leaders marked with an asterisk (*) sign, is presented in the following table.

Table No. 3.4 **List of Dalit Political Leaders in Maharashtra Assembly Elections (1995–2024)**

Name of the Leaders	1995	1999	2004	2009	2014	2019	2024	Total	
1	Khandare Uttamprakash Baburao	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	3
2	Dhoble Laxman Kondiba	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	3
3	Lokhande Sadashiv Kisan	1	1	1	0	0	0	0	3
4	Kamble Dilip Dnyandev	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	2
5	Waghamare Dhondiram Ganpati*	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
6	Kamble Madhukar Shankar*	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
7	Awale Jaywant Gangaram	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
8	Gangurde Vishwas	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
9	Tupe Tukaram Namdeo*	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1

10	Sanamadikar Umaji Dhannapa*	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	1
11	Sale Ramchandra Dnyanoba	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
12	Bagve Ramesh Anandrao	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2
13	Awaghade Sampatrao Ganapat	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
14	Khade Suresh (Bhau) Dagadu	0	0	1	1	1	1	0	4
15	Awale Raju Kisan	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1
16	Bansode Anna Dadu	0	0	0	1	0	1	0	2
17	Kamble Bhausaheb Malhari	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
18	Dolas Hanumant Jagannath*	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
19	Chavan Dipak Pralhad	0	0	0	1	1	1	0	3
20	Dr. Sujit Vasantrao Minachekar	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	2
21	Adv. Chabukswar Gautam Sukhdeo	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
22	Kadam Ramesh Nagnath	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
23	Kamble Sunil Dnyandev	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
24	Kanade Lahu Natha	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
25	Mane Yashwant Vitthal	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
26	Ram Vitthal Satpute	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
27	Awale Raju (Baba) Jaywantrao	0	0	0	0	0	1	1	2
	Total	**7**	**7**	**7**	**8**	**8**	**8**	**8**	**53**

Source: (Election Commission of India [ECI], n.d., https://eci.gov.in/

3.8.3 Limitations of the Study

Every research study has certain limitations, and the present study is no exception. The limitations of the present study are as follows:

1. The study confines itself only to the Dalit political leaders who were elected during the period from 1995 to 2019.
2. The study is limited only to formal Dalit political leaders.
3. The study covers only the Scheduled Caste reserved Assembly constituencies in Maharashtra. The Dalit leaders included in the research belong only to the Scheduled Castes category.
4. Other Dalit leaders associated with Panchayati Raj institutions and local self-government bodies such as Gram Panchayat members, Nagar Parishad members, Panchayat Samiti members, Zila Parishad members, office bearers of political parties, and other local political activists are excluded from the present study.

"शिवनेरी किले पर स्थित छत्रपति शिवाजी महाराज की जन्मभूमि को श्रद्धापूर्वक नमन करते हुए।"

"महाराष्ट्र में कहा जाता है कि—"
आपको शिवनेरी की श्रीमंती, रायगढ़ की भव्यता, पुरंदर की दिव्यता, सिंहगढ़ की शौर्यता और सह्याद्रि की ऊँचाई प्राप्त हो।"

CHAPTER – IV

RISE OF DALIT LEADERSHIP IN MAHARASHTRA POLITICS

"फलटण में लोकमान्य बाल गंगाधर तिलक स्मारक का दर्शन करते हुए एवं भारतीय स्वतंत्रता संग्राम में उनके अमूल्य योगदान, राष्ट्रभक्ति और स्वराज के विचारों को नमन करते हुए।"

"मेरी यूनिवर्सिटी, कोल्हापुर स्थित शिवाजी विश्वविद्यालय में अध्ययन करते हुए गर्व का अनुभव करते हुए।"

4.1 Introduction

Maharshtra in India map
भारत के मानचित्र पर महाराष्ट्र और सीमावर्ती राज्य
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महाराष्ट्र
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Source :- https://gknotes.com/

The historical development of Dalit leadership in Maharashtra is deeply associated with the struggle against caste oppression, untouchability, and social

exclusion. Dalit political leadership emerged from the efforts made by oppressed communities to secure equality, dignity, and participation in political power. The roots of Dalit leadership in Maharashtra can be traced back to the late nineteenth century, when movements against social discrimination and untouchability began to gain momentum. These movements later evolved into organized political struggles under the leadership of B. R. Ambedkar. Dalit political consciousness in Maharashtra developed on two major foundations. First, there were continuous efforts to reform the social environment and challenge caste discrimination. Second, Dalit communities strongly opposed the domination of upper castes and demanded equal treatment in society. The anti-caste movements and campaigns against untouchability played a decisive role in shaping Dalit political identity. These social struggles eventually transformed into political movements aimed at securing representation and participation in governance. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar became the central figure in the development of Dalit political leadership. Through his writings, speeches, and organizational activities, he inspired Dalits to pursue education, social organization, and political participation. He emphasized the famous principles of "Educate, Organize, and Agitate," which became the ideological basis of the Dalit movement. Ambedkar believed that political power was essential for protecting the rights and interests of marginalized communities. He argued that without political representation, Dalits would continue to remain socially and economically oppressed. To achieve political empowerment, Dr. Ambedkar established several organizations and political parties. In 1920, he founded the newspaper *Mooknayak*, which became an important platform for expressing Dalit grievances and promoting political awareness. He also established the *Bahishkrut Hitakarini Sabha* to improve educational and social conditions among Dalits. These institutions laid the foundation for organized Dalit politics in Maharashtra.

Ambedkar further expanded Dalit political mobilization by forming political parties. In 1936, he founded the **Independent Labour Party (ILP)** to unite Dalits, workers, peasants, and other oppressed groups. Later, he established the **Scheduled Castes Federation (SCF)** to defend Dalit rights more directly. After independence, the **Republican Party of India (RPI)** emerged to continue Ambedkar's mission of social justice and political representation. These organizations significantly contributed to the growth of Dalit political leadership in Maharashtra. A major turning point in Dalit politics occurred during the Round Table Conferences held in London between 1930 and 1932. Dr. Ambedkar represented the untouchable communities and demanded separate electorates and political safeguards for Dalits. He argued that Dalits constituted a distinct political community and required independent political representation. The British government initially accepted his demand for

separate electorates. However, Mahatma Gandhi opposed this decision and launched a fast unto death in Yerwada Jail. Under immense political pressure, Ambedkar entered into the historic Poona Pact of 1932, which replaced separate electorates with reserved seats in joint electorates. Although Ambedkar compromised, the Pact ensured political reservation for Dalits and strengthened their representation in legislatures. The emergence of Dalit leadership in Maharashtra also reflected the broader socio-political environment of colonial India. The non-Brahmin movement in Maharashtra had already challenged upper-caste dominance, creating favorable conditions for Dalit political consciousness. Ambedkar transformed this social awakening into a structured political movement. He recognized that social equality could not be achieved without political power and constitutional rights. Consequently, Dalit politics in Maharashtra became closely connected with democratic participation, representation, and constitutional safeguards. **(Census of India, 2011)**

4.2 Political Activities of Dalit Parties in Bombay Province during the Colonial Period

The Government of India Act of 1935 introduced provincial autonomy and expanded electoral politics in British India. Elections to provincial legislative councils were conducted in 1937. The Poona Pact had already increased reserved seats for the Depressed Classes in provincial legislatures. These developments encouraged Dr. Ambedkar to establish an independent political organization to represent Dalits and other marginalized communities.

Independent Labour Party (ILP)

In 1936, Dr. Ambedkar founded the Independent Labour Party (ILP). The party represented a major shift in Dalit politics because it attempted to unite Dalits with workers, peasants, and economically oppressed groups irrespective of caste. Although the party's leadership and support base largely came from Dalit communities, especially the Mahar caste, its ideology emphasized both caste oppression and class exploitation. The term "Labour" in the party's name symbolized its commitment to workers and peasants. Ambedkar realized that Dalits alone, being a numerical minority, could not achieve political success without broader alliances. Therefore, the ILP sought support from industrial workers, poor peasants, tenants, and landless labourers. Its programme included demands for shorter working hours, better wages, improved working conditions, and government regulation of industries. The party also advocated free and compulsory education, housing reforms, sanitation facilities, and social welfare measures. The ILP strongly criticized both Brahmanism and capitalism. Ambedkar

argued that caste oppression and economic exploitation were interconnected systems that oppressed the lower classes. Therefore, the party aimed to fight both caste hierarchy and economic inequality simultaneously. This ideological approach made the ILP unique in Indian politics during the colonial period. (Wikipedia contributors, n.d., https://www.wikipedia.org)

Performance in the 1937 Elections

The 1937 provincial elections marked an important milestone in Dalit politics. The Indian National Congress (INC) attempted to dominate reserved seats for the Depressed Classes, but the ILP emerged as a significant political force in Bombay Province. The party won 11 out of 15 reserved seats and also secured 3 general seats. As a result, the ILP became the second-largest opposition party in the Bombay Legislative Assembly after the Muslim League. The success of the ILP demonstrated the growing political consciousness among Dalits and other marginalized groups. However, the election results also showed the limitations of Ambedkar's influence outside western India. Dalit politics remained regionally fragmented, and caste divisions continued to weaken political unity. Nevertheless, the ILP established Dalits as an organized political force in colonial India. (Ambedkar, 1937)

Agrarian and Labour Movements

The ILP actively participated in labour and peasant struggles. One of the party's major campaigns was against the Khoti land tenure system in the Konkan region. Under this system, intermediaries called Khots collected taxes from peasants and exploited tenant farmers. In 1937, Ambedkar introduced a bill in the Bombay Legislative Assembly to abolish the Khoti system and replace it with the Ryotwari system. This movement united Dalits, peasants, communists, and non-Brahmin groups. Leaders from different communities supported the struggle, demonstrating Ambedkar's ability to build broad alliances. The movement reflected the ILP's commitment to both social justice and economic reforms. The ILP also strongly opposed the Industrial Disputes Bill introduced in 1938 by the Congress government. Ambedkar described the bill as an attack on workers' civil liberties because it restricted the right to strike. He argued that the right to strike was an essential democratic freedom. The ILP organized protests and collaborated with communist leaders such as Shripad Amrit Dange to oppose the legislation. (Indian National Congress [INC], 1937)

Ambedkar's Economic and Social Philosophy

During this period, Ambedkar increasingly emphasized the economic dimensions of caste oppression. He argued that the caste system was not merely a religious institution but also an economic system based on exploitation. According to him, untouchability enabled upper castes to exploit Dalits without responsibility or accountability. Ambedkar criticized the hereditary division of labour imposed by the caste system. He believed that caste prevented economic mobility and denied Dalits access to wealth, education, and employment. In his view, caste created a monopoly over economic resources for upper castes while forcing untouchables into degrading occupations. Thus, Dalit emancipation required both social reform and economic transformation. (Ambedkar, 1937)

Scheduled Castes Federation (SCF)

By the mid-1940s, political circumstances changed significantly. The approach of independence and communal politics compelled Ambedkar to focus more directly on Dalit representation. Consequently, he established the **All India Scheduled Castes Federation (SCF).** Unlike the ILP, which emphasized class alliances, the SCF concentrated specifically on the political rights of Scheduled Castes. The SCF argued that Dalits were not merely a subgroup within Hindu society but a distinct political community with separate interests. Although the party addressed socio-economic issues, its primary objective was to secure constitutional safeguards, representation, and political rights for Dalits. The historical background of Dalit leadership in Maharashtra demonstrates the transformation of Dalits from socially excluded communities into politically organized groups. Under the leadership of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Dalit politics evolved from social reform movements into powerful political struggles for equality, representation, and justice. Through organizations such as the Bahishkrut Hitakarini Sabha, Independent Labour Party, Scheduled Castes Federation, and later the Republican Party of India, Ambedkar created a strong political foundation for Dalit empowerment. The political activities of Dalit parties in the colonial period highlighted the interconnection between caste oppression and economic exploitation. Ambedkar's leadership united Dalits, workers, and peasants in struggles against social discrimination and economic injustice. His contribution not only transformed Dalit politics in Maharashtra but also reshaped Indian democracy by ensuring constitutional safeguards and political representation for marginalized communities. (Wikipedia contributors, n.d., https://www.wikipedia.org) (Ambedkar, 1937)

4.3 Possibilities of Alliance for Dalit Parties in the Political Milieu of the Post-Independence Era

After independence, Dalit political parties faced serious electoral and organizational challenges. The Scheduled Castes Federation (SCF), founded by B. R. Ambedkar, strongly asserted the independent political identity of the Scheduled Castes (SCs). The SCF represented a clear declaration of political separation from the dominant Hindu social order. Ambedkar argued that Dalits were not merely a subsection of Hindu society but a distinct political community with separate interests and aspirations. This idea had already been emphasized during the Round Table Conferences in the 1930s. However, despite its ideological clarity, the SCF faced severe political limitations. The party lost the broad support base that the Independent Labour Party (ILP) had previously enjoyed among workers and peasants. The electoral system itself also created difficulties because candidates in reserved constituencies still depended heavily on the votes of non-SC communities. As a result, even though the SCF received considerable support among Scheduled Castes, it failed to convert votes into legislative representation. In the 1946 provincial elections, the SCF performed poorly and secured only a few seats. In Bombay Province, it failed to win any seat, whereas the ILP earlier had emerged as a major opposition force. At the time of independence, the SCF remained politically weak, with only one representative in the Bombay Legislative Assembly and one in the Constituent Assembly. Ambedkar himself lost the 1948 by-election from the Bhandara Reserved Constituency. These repeated defeats convinced Dalit leaders that alliances with non-SC political organizations were necessary for political survival and success. Since Scheduled Castes formed a minority in almost every constituency, no Dalit-based party could independently win elections using only SC votes. (Wikipedia contributors, n.d., https://www.wikipedia.org)

Alliance with the Peasants and Workers Party (PWP)

To expand its political influence, the SCF entered into alliances with other anti-Congress political groups. One of the earliest and most significant alliances was with the **Peasants and Workers Party (PWP)** during the early 1950s. The PWP had emerged in 1948 as a non-Brahmin political force opposed to Brahmin dominance within the Indian National Congress (INC). It was largely supported by the Kunbi-Maratha community in rural Maharashtra. Although the PWP appeared to be a class-oriented party, it was strongly rooted in caste-based anti-Brahmin politics. The alliance between the SCF and PWP reflected a revival of the

earlier non-Brahmin coalition between Dalits and Kunbi-Maratha communities. Together, they organized movements such as the Satyagraha for landless peasants, which included both SC and non-SC peasants. This movement helped create unity among oppressed rural communities and broadened the social base of Dalit politics. (Ambedkar, 1937)

"डॉ. बाबासाहेब आंबेडकर की प्रेरणा से स्थापित डॉ. आंबेडकर कॉलेज ऑफ लॉ का भ्रमण करते हुए एवं शिक्षा, सामाजिक न्याय और समान अवसरों के उनके विचारों को नमन करते हुए।"

Electoral Alliances in the 1952 Elections

As the first general elections of independent India approached in 1952, Ambedkar attempted to create a wider anti-Congress front. The SCF sought alliances with socialist and regional

parties, including the PWP, the Justice Party in Madras, and Socialist groups. The party argued that Indian democracy required a strong opposition to counter the dominance of the Congress Party. The SCF's election programme attempted to move beyond a narrow caste identity and emphasized democracy, rationalism, and social justice. However, despite being recognized as a national party by the Election Commission and contesting several parliamentary and assembly seats, the SCF performed poorly in the elections. Ambedkar himself suffered repeated electoral defeats before eventually entering the Rajya Sabha with Congress support. Several factors contributed to the alliance's failure. First, Congress successfully projected itself as a national party representing all communities, while opposition parties appeared sectional and community-oriented. Second, the SCF's alliances lacked organizational coordination and ideological consistency. The party simultaneously aligned with caste-based organizations like the PWP and class-oriented socialist groups, creating confusion regarding its ideological position. Furthermore, the electoral alliances failed strategically because their regional support bases often did not overlap. While parties such as the Justice Party shared similar anti-caste ideologies, they lacked influence outside their own regions. Consequently, the SCF could not effectively expand its voter base through these partnerships. (Ambedkar, 1937)

Emergence of the Republican Party of India (RPI)

After the repeated electoral defeats of the SCF, Ambedkar began rethinking Dalit political strategy. During the early 1950s, he increasingly focused on Buddhism and the cultural transformation of Dalits, especially the Mahars. However, as the 1957 elections approached, he proposed the creation of a broader political organization that would transcend caste divisions. In October 1956, shortly before his death, Ambedkar announced the idea of the Republican Party of India (RPI). The RPI was intended to replace the SCF and become a larger, caste-neutral political party representing all oppressed sections of society. Although the RPI was not immediately implemented before the 1957 elections, the idea marked an important shift in Dalit political thinking from exclusive caste politics toward broader social coalitions. (Wikipedia contributors, n.d., https://www.wikipedia.org)

Alliance with the Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti

An important political development occurred when the SCF joined the Samyukta Maharashtra Samiti in 1956. This front included several opposition parties such as the PWP, Communist Party, Socialist Party, and dissident Congress leaders. The movement aimed to create a united

Marathi-speaking state of Maharashtra. Although Ambedkar initially opposed linguistic states, he later supported the Samiti because it offered an opportunity to strengthen the anti-Congress opposition. The alliance proved electorally successful. In the 1957 elections, the SCF won fifteen seats in the Bombay Legislative Assembly, three reserved Lok Sabha seats, and two general Lok Sabha seats. The party also achieved major success in Bombay municipal elections. This performance demonstrated that strategic alliances could significantly improve Dalit electoral outcomes. Nevertheless, tensions soon emerged within the alliance. Disagreements arose over issues such as separate political recognition for Buddhist converts and allocation of Lok Sabha seats. Socialist parties feared that such demands would promote separatism and weaken Maharashtra's unity. These ideological conflicts prevented the alliance from becoming stable and long-lasting.

Ambedkar and Socialist Alliances

Until the final years of his life, Ambedkar continued exploring alliances with socialist leaders such as Ram Manohar Lohia, P. K. Atre, and S. M. Joshi. He hoped that socialist groups would join his proposed Republican Party and create a broad democratic opposition. Although there were ideological differences, Ambedkar recognized that socialist movements and Dalit politics shared concerns about exploitation and inequality. At the same time, Ambedkar remained critical of communism. He feared that communist ideology could attract impoverished Dalits and undermine parliamentary democracy. Therefore, while he cooperated with socialist leaders, he avoided aligning with communist parties on ideological grounds. The sudden death of Ambedkar in December 1956 prevented the full realization of his political vision. However, his successors continued his efforts through the establishment of the Republican Party of India. (Ambedkar, 1938)

"पुणे स्थित आगा खान पैलेस का भ्रमण करते हुए एवं भारत के स्वतंत्रता संग्राम में महात्मा गांधी के योगदान तथा 'भारत छोड़ो आंदोलन' की ऐतिहासिक स्मृतियों को नमन करते हुए।"

4.4 Politics of the Republican Party of India (RPI) under Post-Ambedkar Leadership

Before his death, Ambedkar had announced the dissolution of the Scheduled Castes Federation and proposed the establishment of the Republican Party of India (RPI). The new party was intended to represent all oppressed and marginalized communities rather than only Scheduled Castes. The RPI reflected Ambedkar's broader vision of social democracy, equality, and inclusive politics. Unlike the SCF, which had a strong caste-oriented image, the RPI attempted to adopt a more inclusive class-oriented approach. Its charter declared that the party represented Dalits, Nav Buddhists, Adivasis, labourers, peasants, landless workers, and other socially and economically disadvantaged groups. The party emphasized equal opportunity, social justice, and democratic rights for all Indians. The official formation of the RPI took place in October 1957 at Dhammabhumi in Nagpur, the same place where Ambedkar had embraced Buddhism in 1956. Around one lakh delegates from across Maharashtra attended the meeting and approved the formation of the party. N. Shivraj from Madras was selected as the provisional president. A committee consisting of leaders such as B. D. Khobragade, H. D. Awale, B. C. Kamble, R. D. Bhandare, A. G. Pawar, and D. T. Rupawate was appointed to draft the party constitution. The RPI formally adopted its constitution in 1959 and began preparing for the 1962 general elections. Ambedkar's followers used the organizational structure of the SCF to strengthen the new party. Under leaders like N. Shivraj, the RPI attempted to continue Ambedkar's mission of political empowerment, social equality, and democratic representation for marginalized communities.

The emergence of the RPI represented an important transition in Dalit politics. It reflected the shift from narrow caste-based mobilization toward broader coalition politics involving

peasants, workers, Adivasis, and other oppressed groups. Although the party later experienced factionalism and internal divisions, its formation marked a significant chapter in the history of Dalit leadership in Maharashtra and India.(NSSO,n.d.)

4.5 Revival of Struggle: Dalit Panther

The decline of the Republican Party of India (RPI), factionalism among Dalit leaders, and the continued atrocities against Dalits created deep dissatisfaction among educated Dalit youth in Maharashtra during the late 1960s and early 1970s. The younger generation felt that the established Dalit leadership had failed to continue the revolutionary spirit of B. R. Ambedkar. In this political and social atmosphere, the Dalit Panther (DP) movement emerged as a radical force that revived militant resistance against caste oppression and social injustice. (Sharma, 1984)

Background of the Dalit Panther Movement

The Dalit Panther movement originated in Bombay (Mumbai) in the early 1970s. Educated Dalit youth, many of whom lived in Siddharth Vihar hostel, began discussing issues such as caste discrimination, atrocities against Dalits, and the failures of Dalit political leadership. Most of these young activists were college educated, socially conscious, and heavily influenced by literature and revolutionary thought. Initially, they formed an organization known as the Youth Front to raise awareness about Dalit issues. Literary circles played a major role in shaping the movement. Many activists were poets and writers who expressed Dalit suffering and anger through literature. Journals such as *Vidroh* became platforms for radical Dalit expression. The inspiration for the Dalit Panther was strongly connected to the speech of Dr. Wankhede at the Marathi Sahitya Sammelan held in Mahad, which deeply influenced young activists such as Namdeo Dhasal. (Wikipedia contributors, n.d., https://www.wikipedia.org) (Sharma, 1984)

Formation of Dalit Panther

The immediate reason behind the formation of the Dalit Panther was the increasing violence and atrocities against Dalits in rural Maharashtra. Dalit youth were angered by incidents in which Dalits were attacked, displaced from villages, humiliated, and murdered. These atrocities created a feeling that traditional political methods had failed to protect Dalit communities. Leaders such as J. V. Pawar and Namdeo Dhasal formally established the Dalit

Panther organization. The movement quickly attracted support from Dalit youth because of its aggressive language, militant posture, and uncompromising opposition to caste oppression. Public meetings and demonstrations in Dalit localities of Bombay helped the movement spread rapidly across Maharashtra. A historic public meeting was organized at Siddharth Nagar on 9 July 1972, where the Panther programme was publicly declared. The Dalit Panther drew inspiration from the Black Panther Movement in the United States, which fought against racial oppression. Similarly, the Dalit Panther emphasized militant resistance, self-respect, and revolutionary struggle against caste-based exploitation.

Dalit Panther Manifesto and Ideology

The **Dalit Panther Manifesto,** written by Namdeo Dhasal in 1973, reflected the movement's radical and left-oriented ideology. The manifesto broadened the meaning of the term "Dalit." According to the Panthers, Dalits included not only Scheduled Castes but also landless labourers, poor peasants, workers, Adivasis, women, nomadic tribes, and all economically and socially oppressed groups. This broader interpretation marked a major ideological shift in Dalit politics. The Panthers attempted to unite caste struggle with class struggle. Their ideology resembled the earlier programme of the Independent Labour Party (ILP) founded by Ambedkar in the 1930s, which sought to unite workers, peasants, and untouchables. The manifesto identified landlords, capitalists, moneylenders, casteist organizations, bureaucrats, and exploitative political systems as enemies of Dalits. The Panthers argued that caste oppression and economic exploitation were interconnected systems. Therefore, social revolution required the destruction of both caste hierarchy and class domination. Namdeo Dhasal strongly criticized Hindu feudalism and argued that untouchability had become more complex due to economic exploitation. The Panthers believed that the Congress government protected caste oppression and failed to address Dalit issues. They also criticized the Republican Party of India (RPI), accusing its leaders of factionalism, selfishness, and betrayal of Ambedkar's revolutionary ideals. (Ambedkar, 1938)

"छत्रपति राजर्षि शाहू महाराज की प्रतिमा के समक्ष उनके महान कार्यों को नमन करते हुए।"

Criticism of the RPI and Congress

The Dalit Panther strongly condemned the RPI leadership for becoming disconnected from ordinary Dalits. According to the Panthers, the RPI had become dominated by middle-class elites who used Ambedkar's name for personal gain while abandoning revolutionary politics. The Panthers accused RPI leaders of collaborating with the Congress Party and neglecting mass struggles. The movement also criticized the Indian National Congress (INC) for failing to solve issues related to land redistribution, caste violence, and social justice. The Panthers argued that Congress supported Hindu feudal interests and maintained structures of oppression. At the same time, the Panthers criticized communist and socialist parties for ignoring caste oppression. According to the manifesto, left parties focused only on economic exploitation and neglected untouchability as a form of social oppression. Thus, the Panthers attempted to combine anti-caste politics with class-based revolutionary politics.

Electoral Politics and Political Alliances

Although the Dalit Panther claimed to reject traditional parliamentary politics, it indirectly influenced electoral politics. During the 1974 Bombay Central by-election, the Panthers called for a boycott of the election because they believed Dalit representatives could not truly be elected under the existing political system. This boycott weakened Congress-supported candidates and indirectly helped the Communist Party of India (CPI) candidate win the election. The incident demonstrated the Panthers' strong opposition to both Congress and the co-opted RPI leadership. Some Panther leaders had earlier associations with socialist and left-wing organizations. Namdeo Dhasal had connections with socialist groups, while other members were linked with organizations such as the Lal Nishan Party. These associations contributed to the movement's revolutionary and class-oriented ideology. (Economic Survey of Maharashtra, n.d.)

Internal Ideological Divisions

Despite its rapid rise, the Dalit Panther soon faced internal ideological conflicts. A major division emerged between Namdeo Dhasal and Raja Dhale. Dhasal promoted a broader revolutionary ideology that combined caste struggle with class struggle and emphasized alliances with oppressed groups across society. In contrast, Raja Dhale emphasized Buddhism, Ambedkarite cultural identity, and parliamentary methods. He opposed violent revolutionary politics and criticized communist influence within the organization. Dhale believed that the Dalit movement should remain firmly rooted in Ambedkar's ideology rather than Marxist politics. These ideological differences deepened after the Worli riots of 1974. Dhasal and his supporters participated in broader anti-government protests, while Dhale focused more on Dalit identity and Buddhist cultural politics. Mutual accusations of communist influence and ideological betrayal eventually divided the organization into rival factions. (Ambedkar, 1938)

"महात्मा फुले और सावित्रीबाई फुले के समक्ष उनके सामाजिक परिवर्तन और शिक्षा के महान कार्यों को स्मरण करते हुए।"

Dalit Panther and Class-Caste Analysis

One of the most important contributions of the Dalit Panther movement was its attempt to reinterpret caste oppression in relation to changing economic conditions. Dhasal argued that modernization and industrialization had destroyed traditional caste occupations. Communities such as the Matangs and Chambhars lost their traditional livelihoods due to technological and industrial changes. This analysis highlighted how caste oppression was increasingly connected with economic marginalization and unemployment. The Panthers therefore viewed Dalit liberation not only as a social issue but also as a struggle against economic exploitation and capitalist structures. The Dalit Panther movement represented a major revival of militant Dalit politics in Maharashtra. It emerged in response to caste atrocities, the failure of established Dalit leadership, and dissatisfaction with mainstream political parties. Inspired by Ambedkarite ideology as well as revolutionary socialist thought, the Panthers attempted to unite caste struggle with class struggle and build solidarity among all oppressed groups.

Although internal ideological divisions weakened the movement, the Dalit Panther left a lasting impact on Dalit politics, literature, and social movements in India. It revived the spirit of resistance among Dalit youth and reintroduced radical anti-caste politics into Maharashtra's political landscape. The movement also demonstrated that caste oppression could not be separated from broader issues of economic inequality, political exclusion, and social injustice. (Sharma, 1984)

Revival of Struggle: Dalit Panther

The Dalit Panther movement experienced intense ideological conflicts soon after its emergence. One of the most significant issues within the organization was the debate regarding Marxism, communism, and revolutionary politics. Many Dalits in Maharashtra were suspicious of extreme left ideologies, especially Naxalism, and therefore accusations of being "Lal Bhai" (communist sympathizers) became controversial among Panther leaders. Namdeo Dhasal, despite his acknowledged association with socialist and left-wing intellectuals, denied formal affiliation with communist organizations. The industrial and labour-oriented political environment of Maharashtra differed significantly from eastern Indian states such as Bihar and Odisha, where radical communist movements were stronger. Maharashtra had a long tradition of trade unions, socialist politics, and Ambedkarite parliamentary democracy. Therefore, many Dalits accepted socialist ideals but remained cautious about violent revolutionary methods.

Ambedkarite Legacy and Parliamentary Democracy

The internal ideological tensions of the Dalit Panther movement were also influenced by the political philosophy of B. R. Ambedkar. Ambedkar strongly believed in parliamentary democracy and constitutional methods. He consistently warned Dalits against blindly embracing communism because he considered it excessively radical and potentially harmful to democratic institutions. This Ambedkarite commitment to democracy deeply shaped post-Ambedkar Dalit politics in Maharashtra. Many Dalit leaders attempted to inherit Ambedkar's political legacy, but ideological disagreements and personal ambitions often produced conflicts and organizational instability. The same pattern of factionalism that existed in the Republican Party of India (RPI) was also visible in the Dalit Panther movement. (Ambedkar, 1938)

Decline after the Worli Riot

The Dalit Panther movement weakened significantly after the **Worli Riot of 1974**. Instead of consolidating the movement, internal disputes among leaders intensified. Different factions became more concerned with organizational control and ideological dominance than with building mass unity. In 1977, another major issue emerged in Maharashtra politics: the demand to rename *Marathwada University* after Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. Arun Kamble, leader of the Bharatiya Dalit Panthers faction, strongly supported this movement. Several Dalit organizations from Marathwada and other parts of Maharashtra joined the campaign because the issue symbolized Dalit dignity and identity. However, the movement also generated severe opposition from upper-caste groups. Since the issue was closely linked to caste identity, it failed to attract broad non-Dalit support. Instead, it intensified tensions between Scheduled Castes and non-Scheduled Castes in the Marathwada region. Violent riots broke out, causing deaths and displacement of thousands of people. Compared to the earlier militant phase of the Dalit Panther, the Bharatiya Dalit Panther adopted a relatively moderate approach while confronting upper-caste hostility. Later, leaders such as Arun Kamble and Ramdas Athawale attempted to revive the movement around issues like the Mandal Commission and the renaming struggle, but they were unable to sustain a strong united front.

Class-Caste Conflict within Dalit Panther

The short life of the Dalit Panther movement became a classic example of the conflict between caste-based and class-based ideologies. The Panthers attempted to combine the philosophies of Marx and Ambedkar into a unified liberation movement. Both traditions opposed exploitation and inequality, but their methods and priorities often differed. Ambedkar himself had occasionally accepted class-oriented programmes and believed socialist parties could become allies of Dalit movements. However, within the Dalit Panther experiment, Marxist and Ambedkarite ideologies failed to merge smoothly. Instead, ideological differences became sharper as leadership conflicts intensified. After the fragmentation of the Dalit Panther, class-caste fusion politics largely disappeared from Maharashtra's Dalit movement. Instead of ideological experimentation, political co-option and alliances with mainstream parties became the dominant strategy among Dalit leaders.

Challenges of Dalit Political Parties

Dalit political parties in Maharashtra consistently faced structural limitations. Since Dalits constituted a numerical minority even in reserved constituencies, independent electoral

success was difficult. Mainstream parties, especially the Indian National Congress (INC), further weakened Dalit-based parties by co-opting influential Dalit leaders and presenting themselves as protectors of Scheduled Castes. To overcome these limitations, Dalit parties frequently entered alliances with socialist, communist, and regional parties. While some alliances attempted to create broader class-based coalitions, they often weakened Dalit political unity. Leaders became divided over strategy, ideology, and personal interests, making collective political mobilization difficult. The RPI underwent repeated splits and reunifications during the 1960s and 1970s, which contributed to the emergence of the Dalit Panther as a radical alternative. Later, new organizations such as the Bharatiya Republican Party, led by Prakash Ambedkar, attempted to revive Dalit politics. However, factional conflicts continued among leaders such as Prakash Ambedkar, Ramdas Athawale, Raja Dhale, and R.S. Gavai. Although many organizations continued using the RPI name, they increasingly functioned as separate political groups with rival leaderships rather than a united Republican movement. (Ambedkar, 1938)

Decline of the Dalit Panther

By the early 1980s, the Dalit Panther movement had largely lost its political influence. Internal factionalism, leadership disputes, and organizational fragmentation weakened the movement. Different Panther factions focused on separate regional and political issues, especially the Marathwada University renaming movement. After 1981–1982, Dalit Panther organizations were unable to significantly shape Maharashtra's political landscape. Despite this decline, the movement left a lasting legacy in Dalit literature, youth activism, and radical anti-caste politics. (Sharma, 1984)

4.6 Politics of Navbouddha

The politics of the Navbouddha community in Maharashtra developed primarily from opposition to the caste system and inspiration drawn from the reformist ideas of Jyotirao Phule, Shahu Maharaj, Vitthal Ramji Shinde, and Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. Navbouddha politics emphasized social transformation and equality rather than mere reform within the Hindu social order. After conversion to Buddhism under Ambedkar's leadership in 1956, many former Mahars adopted a new Buddhist identity. The Republican Party became the principal political platform for Navbouddha communities. During the post-independence period, Navbouddha politics was considered a potential counterbalance to upper-caste political domination. However, repeated factionalism within the Republican Party and the decline of

the Dalit Panther weakened Navbouddha politics. Political issues increasingly centered on middle-class concerns such as reservations and the renaming of Marathwada University.

Rise of Hindutva Politics and Navbouddha Leadership

After 1984, the rise of Hindutva politics created new challenges for Dalit movements. Leaders such as Prakash Ambedkar attempted to focus on issues affecting landless labourers and marginalized communities rather than only middle-class concerns. Despite these efforts, factional politics continued among leaders such as Athawale, Gavai, and Khobragade. Attempts were made to create a unified Navbouddha political platform, but group rivalries persisted. In the 1995 Maharashtra Vidhan Sabha elections, a "third front" involving Dalit organizations failed electorally. The Athawale faction allied with Congress but failed to secure significant success. (Election Commission of India, n.d.)

Division between Navbouddha and Non-Navbouddha Dalits

After the 1990s, a clear division emerged between Navbouddha and non-Navbouddha Dalit castes such as Matangs, Charmakars, and Dhors. While Navbouddha politics remained influenced by Ambedkarite ideology, many non-Buddhist Dalit groups aligned with Congress, Shiv Sena, BJP, or other regional parties. Historical disagreements between Buddhist and non-Buddhist Dalits had existed even during the pre-independence period. Some Matang and Charmakar leaders supported Ambedkar's movements, while others opposed his strategies such as temple-entry movements and religious conversion. Congress also encouraged separate organizational identities among non-Buddhist Dalit castes. Thus, legislative politics contributed to divisions among Dalit communities. The inability to unite Navbouddha and non-Navbouddha groups weakened broader Dalit political solidarity in Maharashtra.

4.7 Republican Party

The Republican Party of India (RPI) occupies an important position in Maharashtra politics. The symbolic blue Republican flag became closely associated with Dalit political identity and Ambedkarite ideology. The origins of Dalit participation in legislative politics can be traced back to the Poona Pact and the elections of 1937, in which Dr. Ambedkar's Independent Labour Party participated. Later, Ambedkar established the Scheduled Castes Federation (SCF) to represent Dalits politically. However, the SCF performed poorly in the elections of 1946 and 1952. Just before his death, Ambedkar proposed the formation of the Republican Party of India to unite all progressive and oppressed sections under one political platform. The

party was formally established on 3 October 1957 by Ambedkar's followers. (Ambedkar, 1938)

Leadership and Factionalism

Important leaders of the RPI included P.N. Rajbhoj, Rajabhau Khobragade, Dadasaheb Gaikwad, B.C. Kamble, R.S. Gavai, and others. However, the history of the RPI soon became characterized by repeated splits, factionalism, and leadership struggles. The party split as early as 1958 due to disagreements regarding organizational structure and leadership elections. Over time, personal rivalries and ego conflicts became more significant than ideological debates. Leaders frequently broke away to form their own factions or joined the Congress Party. By the 1970s, increasing caste violence and dissatisfaction with RPI leadership contributed to the rise of the Dalit Panther movement. Later, Prakash Ambedkar formed the Bharatiya Republican Party in the 1980s, further fragmenting the Republican movement.

Republican Party in Contemporary Politics

During the 1990s and early 2000s, various RPI factions aligned alternately with Congress, Janata Dal, BJP, Shiv Sena, and NCP. Leaders such as Ramdas Athawale, Prakash Ambedkar, R.S. Gavai, and B.C. Kamble represented different factions of the Republican movement. Despite organizational fragmentation, the Republican Party retained emotional and symbolic importance among Dalits because of its association with Ambedkarite ideology. This emotional connection continued to influence Maharashtra politics, and many political groups attempted to use the Republican identity to attract Dalit voters. Thus, although the RPI suffered from factionalism and weak electoral performance, it remained a significant cultural and political symbol of Dalit assertion and Ambedkarite politics in Maharashtra.

Table No. 4.1 Republican Party in Vidhan Sabha Elections of Maharashtra (1962–2024)

Year	Party	Contested Seats	Won Seats	Percentage of Total Votes Received
1962	RPI	66	3	5.38
1967	RPI	79	5	6.68

1972	RPI (Khobragade)	56	0	1.34
1972	RPI	118	2	3.77
1978	RPI (Khobragade)	23	2	1.41
1978	RPI	25	2	1.06
1980	RPI (Khobragade)	42	1	1.36
1980	RPI	36	0	0.76
1985	RPI (Khobragade)	16	0	0.52
1985	RPI	54	0	1
1990	B.R.P.	43	0	0.14
1990	RPI (Khobragade)	18	1	0.5
1990	RPI	21	0	0.7
1990	RPI (B)	1	0	0
1990	BSP	122	0	0.42
1995	RPI (Khobragade)	13	0	0.17
1995	RPI	61	0	0.15
1995	BRP–BBMS	129	0	3.03
1995	BSP	145	0	1.49
1999	RPI (Khobragade)	1	0	0
1999	RPI (Athawale)	10	1	0.69
1999	BRP–BMS	34	3	1.85
1999	BSP	83	0	0.39
2004	RPI (Gawai)	4	0	0.15
2004	RPI (B.C. Kamble)	2	0	0

2004	RPI (Athawale)	2	1	0.49
2004	RPI (Kawade)	55	0	1.18
2004	RPI (T.M. Kamble)	18	0	0.03
2004	BRP–BMM	83	1	1.23
2004	BSP	272	0	4
2009	RPI	6	0	0.1
2009	RPI (A)	79	0	0.85
2009	RPI (D)	15	0	0.2
2009	RPI	5	0	0
2009	BSP	288	0	2.35
2014	RPI (A)	5	0	0.19
2014	BSP	280	0	2.25
2019	RPI (Kh)	3	0	0
2019	VBA	236	0	4.57
2019	BSP	262	0	0.92
2024	**RPI (A)**	**6**	**0**	**0.1**
2024	**VBA**	**200**	**0**	**2.21**
2024	**BSP**	**237**	**0**	**Below 1%**

Source: Statistical Reports of Maharashtra Legislative Assembly Elections (1962–2019); Election Commission of India; Maharashtra Legislative Assembly Election 2024 reports

4.8 The Progress of Bahujan Samaj Party

The emergence of Bahujan politics in Maharashtra represented an important phase in the transformation of Dalit and backward-class political movements. The term *Bahujan* refers to the socially, economically, educationally, and politically marginalized majority of society, including Other Backward Classes (OBCs), Dalits, backward Muslim groups, backward Christian communities, workers, peasants, and other oppressed sections. These communities were historically deprived of fair participation in political power, wealth, social respect, and state resources. The concept of Bahujan politics in Maharashtra was initially introduced by

Vitthal Ramji Shinde, popularly known as Maharshi Shinde. Instead of using the term "non-Brahmin," he preferred the broader and more inclusive concept of "Bahujan." Later, organizations such as the Shetkari Kamgar Party and even the Congress Party adopted aspects of Bahujan politics. Yashwantrao Chavan attempted to implement Bahujan ideology through mainstream politics. However, his efforts were limited because the programme failed to adequately empower workers, peasants, and marginalized communities. A more significant phase of Bahujan politics emerged during the 1990s, when caste-based mobilization and backward-class politics gained momentum across India.

The development of Bahujan politics in Maharashtra occurred in three important stages:

1. Bahujan Mahasangh
2. Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP)
3. Caste-based social organizations

These organizations especially expanded in the Vidarbha and Marathwada regions of Maharashtra, where multi-party competition and caste-based political mobilization became more visible.

Rise of Bahujan Ideology

The decade of the 1990s witnessed the rapid growth of Bahujan ideology in Maharashtra. Before this period, although the Congress Party and the non-Brahmin movement promoted ideas of social equality, they could not effectively institutionalize Bahujan political theory.

Political developments during the 1970s and 1980s created favourable conditions for the rise of Bahujan politics. During the leadership of Indira Gandhi, many regional leaders lost influence within the Congress Party. This unintentionally encouraged the emergence of separate OBC political consciousness and increased the possibility of divisions within the dominant Maratha political structure. A major turning point came with the implementation of the recommendations of the Mandal Commission. The Mandal Commission sought to provide reservations and political recognition to Other Backward Classes (OBCs). It separated OBC political identity from Maratha dominance and encouraged the emergence of OBCs as an independent political force. During the 1980s, organizations such as Shiv Sena and Shetkari Sanghatana gained popularity in Maharashtra. Many youth from OBC communities joined these movements because they offered opportunities for political participation and challenged established political elites. Castes such as Mali and Vanjari became increasingly active in political mobilization.

"लोकमाता अहिल्याबाई होल्कर की प्रतिमा के समक्ष उनके महान नेतृत्व, धर्मनिष्ठा और जनकल्याणकारी कार्यों को स्मरण करते हुए।"

Akola Pattern

One of the important political experiments in Bahujan politics was the "Akola Pattern," implemented by the Bahujan Mahasangh and the Bharatiya Republican Party (BRP) led by Prakash Ambedkar. The objective of this model was to unite Dalits and OBCs into a common political alliance capable of challenging Maratha political dominance. The Akola Pattern was tested in elections to Panchayat Samitis, Zilla Parishads, and Vidhan Sabha constituencies, especially in Akola and Kinwat regions. The experiment achieved some success at the local government level and demonstrated the political potential of Dalit–OBC unity. (Prakash Ambedkar, n.d.)

4.9 Bahujan Mahasangh

The Bahujan Mahasangh emerged as an important organization representing OBCs, workers, peasants, women, Dalits, and Muslims. The organization aimed to unite socially and economically marginalized groups under a common political platform. The Bahujan Mahasangh was first established at the district level in Akola on 23 September 1990 under the leadership of Makhram Pawar. Later, it was formally organized at the state level on 15 February 1993. Important leaders associated with the organization included Makhram Pawar, Prakash Ambedkar, B.R. Shirsat, Suryabhan Dhomne, and Dr. Dashrath Bhande. Although many of its leaders had earlier associations with the Bharatiya Republican Party, the Bahujan Mahasangh attempted to create a broader coalition beyond traditional Dalit politics. Its organizational structure reflected a careful caste balance:

- 60% leadership representation for Navbouddha communities
- 40% representation for non-Navbouddha communities

Leadership positions were often given to OBC leaders in order to strengthen Dalit–OBC unity.

Social Base of Bahujan Mahasangh

The growth strategy of the Bahujan Mahasangh was strongly based on caste mobilization. The organization expanded mainly among the following communities:

1. Mali
2. Banjara
3. Dhangar
4. Navbouddha communities
5. Vanjari
6. Teli castes

The organization became stronger in regions where these communities were numerically significant.

Ideology of Bahujan Mahasangh

According to the Bahujan Mahasangh, the term *Bahujan* referred to all communities disadvantaged by the social, religious, educational, cultural, economic, and political system. The organization argued that under the appearance of Hindu unity, marginalized groups were continuously exploited. Therefore, the Mahasangh opposed caste hierarchy and communal politics.

The organization emphasized:

1. Social equality
2. Secularism
3. Rights of marginalized communities
4. Land distribution for the landless
5. Compulsory education
6. Dignity and political representation for Bahujans

These demands reflected both social justice and economic redistribution.

Electoral Strategy

During the 1995 Maharashtra Vidhan Sabha elections, the Bahujan Mahasangh openly adopted caste-based electoral strategies. It attempted to create political polarization by presenting itself as the representative of oppressed Bahujan communities against dominant castes. The party distributed approximately 81% of its tickets to candidates from OBC communities such as:

1. Mali
2. Dhangar
3. Vanjari
4. Teli
5. Banjara

Only about 19% of candidates were from worker-peasant groups outside these caste categories. The organization also attempted to include Muslims within the broader Bahujan identity. Additionally, it tried to separate poor Marathas from wealthy Maratha elites in order to weaken dominant caste solidarity. Through this strategy, the Bahujan Mahasangh sought to mobilize marginalized social groups into a broad anti-elite political alliance. The rise of Bahujan politics in Maharashtra marked an important transformation in the state's social and political landscape. Organizations such as the Bahujan Mahasangh and Bahujan Samaj Party attempted to unite Dalits, OBCs, Muslims, workers, peasants, and other marginalized communities under a common political identity. Inspired by anti-caste and social justice ideologies, these movements challenged traditional caste hierarchies and dominant political structures. Although Bahujan politics achieved limited electoral success, it played a major role in increasing political consciousness among backward classes and marginalized communities. It also highlighted the possibility of Dalit–OBC unity as an alternative political force in Maharashtra.

Table No. 4.2

Classification of Bahujan Mahasangh – Caste Wise Candidates

Sr. No.	Caste Group	1995	1999	2024*
1	Upper Castes	1	0	2
2	Maratha	8	0	12
3	Farmer OBC	53	10	82
4	Balutedar OBC	3	2	18
5	Dalit	38	15	54
6	Adivasi	7	3	14
7	Non–Marathi	1	1	5
8	Muslim	13	3	9
9	Christian	1	3	1
	Total	**125**	**34**	**197**

Source:Pawar Prakash (2024), Bahujan Paksh – Maharashtratil Satta Sangharsh, Samkalin Publication, p.181.
(Election Commission of India [ECI], n.d., https://eci.gov.in/

4.10 Bahujan Samaj Party

After 1999, the Bahujan Mahasangh attempted to reorganize Other Backward Classes (OBCs), workers, and technical communities under a broader Bahujan political framework. The organization sought to create a political contest between the *Bahujan* (majority oppressed communities) and the Mahajan (socially dominant and privileged sections). However, its influence remained largely confined to the Vidarbha region and failed to expand effectively throughout Maharashtra. The Bahujan Mahasangh gradually weakened because of internal ideological conflicts and contradictions in its legislative politics. OBC leaders within the organization increasingly questioned the political direction of the movement. As a result, the ideological unity of the Mahasangh began to decline within a short period, especially during

the decade of the 1990s. The organization's efforts to create a strong Bahujan coalition faced limitations due to caste rivalries, leadership disputes, and regional political divisions.

Formation of the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP)

The Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) was founded by Kanshi Ram on 14 April 1984. The BSP introduced a broader and more inclusive interpretation of the term Bahujan. According to Kanshi Ram, all non-Brahmin communities constituted the Bahujan majority. Therefore, the BSP attempted to unite:

1. Marathas
2. OBCs
3. Dalits
4. Muslims
5. Other backward communities

under a common political identity. The BSP's ideology was influenced by anti-caste movements and the social justice philosophies of leaders such as B. R. Ambedkar, Jyotirao Phule, and Shahu Maharaj. The party aimed to transform the numerical strength of marginalized communities into political power. (Makhram Pawar, 1990)

Social Composition of BSP in Maharashtra

In Maharashtra, the BSP initially attracted support from Navbouddha communities and Ambedkarite activists. However, the party consciously attempted to broaden its social base beyond Buddhist Dalits. The organizational structure of the BSP reflected this strategy. Out of the 25 members of the party's Executive Council in 1993, 16 belonged to castes other than Navbouddha communities. This demonstrated the BSP's attempt to create a wider Bahujan coalition by incorporating OBC leaders and backward communities into positions of leadership. Nevertheless, some OBC leaders felt that they were still not receiving adequate representation within the party. For example, Mahadev Jankar from the Dhangar community argued that OBCs were not given sufficient political space in the BSP organization. (Bahujan Mahasangh, 1993)

BSP and Bahujan Politics in Maharashtra

The BSP attempted to challenge the traditional dominance of Maratha and upper-caste politics in Maharashtra by mobilizing backward classes, Dalits, and minorities. Its political strategy

focused on caste-based social engineering and coalition building among marginalized communities. However, unlike in Uttar Pradesh, the BSP could not establish itself as a dominant political force in Maharashtra.

Several factors limited the growth of the BSP in the state:

1. Strong regional influence of the Congress Party and later Shiv Sena–BJP alliances.
2. Fragmentation within Dalit and OBC politics.
3. Competition from Republican Party factions and Bahujan Mahasangh organizations.
4. Regional caste differences between Vidarbha, Marathwada, and Western Maharashtra.
5. Lack of stable leadership and organizational unity.

Despite these limitations, the BSP played an important role in spreading Bahujan political consciousness in Maharashtra. It encouraged the political participation of OBCs, Dalits, and minority communities and strengthened debates around social justice, caste representation, and political equality. The Bahujan Samaj Party represented an important attempt to unite all marginalized non-Brahmin communities under a single political platform. Inspired by Kanshi Ram's Bahujan ideology, the BSP tried to convert social majority into political power by mobilizing Dalits, OBCs, Muslims, and backward castes. Although the party achieved limited electoral success in Maharashtra, it contributed significantly to the growth of Bahujan consciousness and anti-caste political discourse in the state.

Table No. 4.3 BSP's Votes in Maharashtra Vidhan Sabha Elections

Year	Contested Seats	Vote Share %
1990	122	0.42
1995	145	1.49
1999	83	0.39
2004	272	4
2009	288	2.35
2014	280	2.25
2019	262	0.92
2024	**237**	**0.96**

Source: Statistical Reports of Maharashtra Legislative Assembly Elections (1990–2024); Election Commission of India; Maharashtra Assembly Election 2024 statistical data.

Growth and Limitations of BSP in Maharashtra

After 2000, the Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP) expanded its political strategy in Maharashtra by attempting to include Muslims and Other Backward Classes (OBCs) along with Dalit communities. From 2003 onward, the BSP consciously adopted a social engineering strategy aimed at creating unity between Nav Bouddha communities and OBC groups. However, caste-based alliances alone were insufficient for the BSP to establish itself as a major political force in Maharashtra. Although the party could influence vote shares and indirectly affect the electoral performance of Congress and Bahujan Mahasangh, it was unable to achieve major electoral success independently. Following the 1995 Maharashtra Vidhan Sabha elections, the BSP intensified its efforts to organize OBC communities. During the 1999 and 2004 elections, the party fielded several non-Buddhist and OBC candidates in an attempt to broaden its support base. Despite these efforts, the strategy did not produce significant electoral gains. Another limitation of the BSP in Maharashtra was its inability to build strong organizational support through BAMCEF since 1978. Although the BSP maintained a small but influential support base in certain constituencies, it failed to emerge as a dominant state-wide force. The growth of the BSP also contributed to the fragmentation of Bahujan politics. Instead of consolidating all marginalized communities under one platform, multiple Bahujan-oriented organizations and parties competed with one another for the same social base. As a result, Dalit and OBC votes became divided among the BSP, Republican Party factions, Bahujan Mahasangh, Congress, and regional parties. Despite these limitations, Bahujan ideology achieved an important ideological success. Even though Bahujan politics did not create a dominant independent political structure in Maharashtra, its principles of social justice, caste equality, and representation influenced almost all major political parties in the state. Thus, Bahujan politics significantly shaped the political discourse of Maharashtra after the 1990s. The emergence of political awareness among Dalit communities in Maharashtra began historically with the establishment of the Independent Labour Party (ILP) and the Scheduled Castes Federation (SCF) under the leadership of B. R. Ambedkar. These organizations marked the beginning of organized political participation by socially oppressed communities that had previously remained excluded from political power and representation. = The participation of Dalits in parliamentary politics challenged the deeply rooted caste hierarchy and rejected the traditional image of servitude imposed upon untouchables by upper-caste Hindu society. The growth of Dalit political consciousness represented not only a struggle for political representation but also a movement for dignity, equality, and democratic rights. Through organizations such as the ILP, SCF, Republican Party of India (RPI), Dalit Panther, Bahujan Mahasangh, and Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), Dalit and Bahujan politics in Maharashtra

evolved through different phases. These movements attempted to combine struggles against caste oppression with broader issues such as land redistribution, labour rights, social justice, education, and political representation. The history of Dalit and Bahujan politics in Maharashtra also reveals continuous tensions between caste-based identity politics and class-based ideological politics. While some organizations emphasized Ambedkarite constitutional democracy and Dalit identity, others attempted broader alliances among workers, peasants, OBCs, minorities, and oppressed social groups. However, factionalism, ideological conflicts, leadership struggles, and electoral alliances with dominant parties often weakened the unity of these movements. Nevertheless, the Dalit and Bahujan movements transformed Maharashtra's political landscape by increasing political consciousness among marginalized communities and challenging caste-based social inequality. These movements also played a crucial role in strengthening democratic participation and promoting constitutional values such as equality, justice, liberty, and fraternity in Indian society.(Bahujan Samaj Party [BSP], n.d.)

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Date : 27th & 28th February, 2024
Time : 10:30 a.m.

"शिवाजी विश्वविद्यालय, कोल्हापुर में 'भारत में जनजातीय समावेशन (Tribal Inclusion in India)' विषय पर आयोजित राष्ट्रीय सम्मेलन में सहभागिता करते हुए तथा आदिवासी समुदायों के सामाजिक, शैक्षणिक और आर्थिक सशक्तिकरण पर विचार-विमर्श करते हुए।

CHAPTER V

SOCIO-ECONOMIC OF THE DALIT POLITICAL LEADERS IN MAHARASHTRA

"छत्रपति संभाजी महाराज की प्रतिमा के समक्ष उनके वीरता, त्याग और स्वराज्य के प्रति समर्पण को स्मरण करते हुए।"

5.1 Introduction

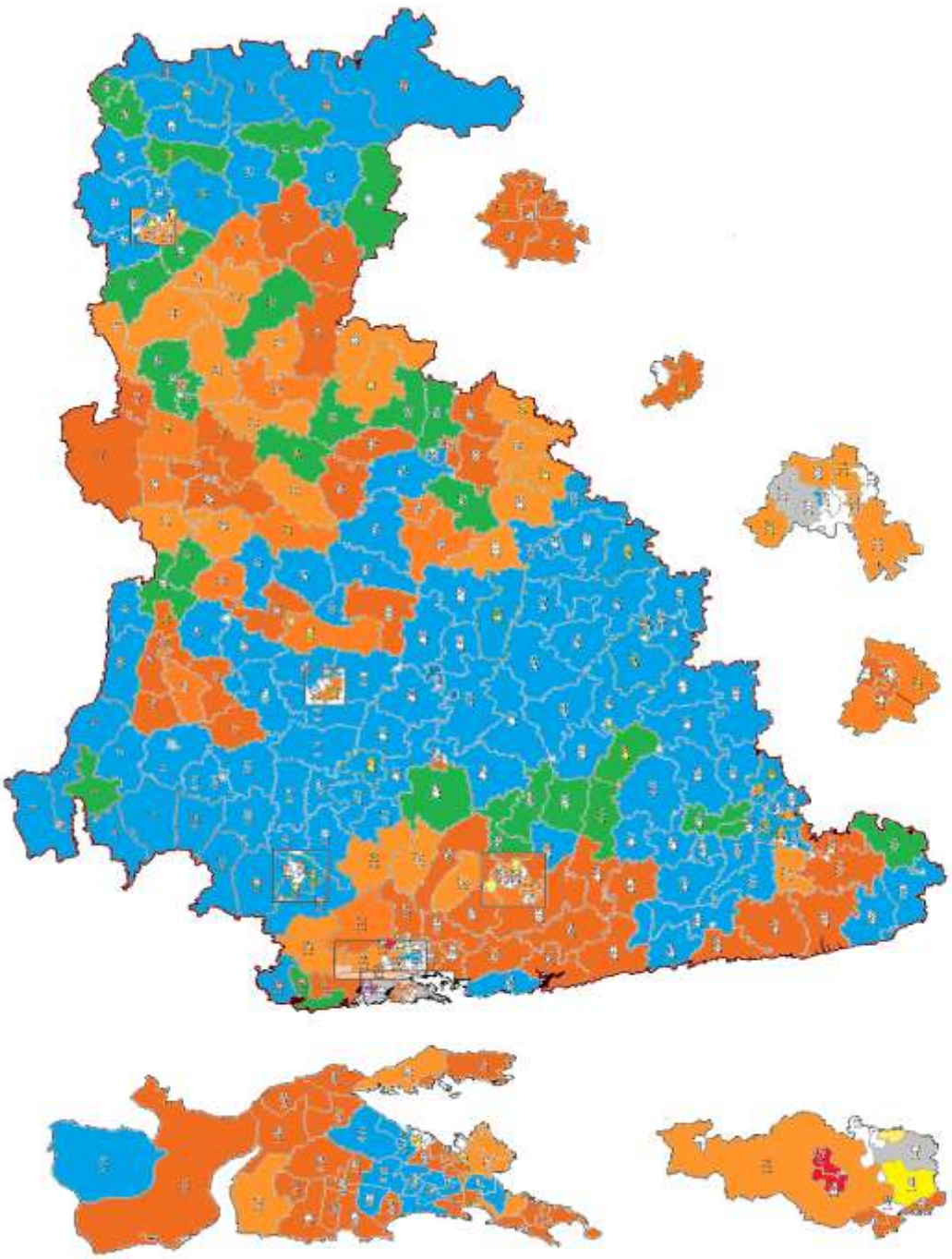
This chapter attempts to examine the socio-economic background of Dalit political leaders in Maharashtra who were elected as Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs). The analysis is based on intensive fieldwork conducted among 22 Dalit political leaders representing different political parties and ideological backgrounds. These leaders contested elections through various political parties such as the Indian National Congress, Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), Republican Party of India (RPI), Shetkari organizations, and as Independent candidates. The study specifically focuses on those Dalit leaders who achieved representation at the state legislative level through the democratic electoral process. Leaders who were active only at the local or community level but had not attained state-level political recognition were excluded from the scope of the study. Although many Dalit social activists and community workers consider

themselves representatives of Dalit interests and actively engage in social reform movements, the present study primarily concentrates on elected political leadership. The rationale behind this focus is that political representation within legislative institutions provides access to state power, policy-making processes, and developmental resources that significantly influence the socio-economic advancement of marginalized communities. Political power has historically been viewed by Dalit movements, especially under the influence of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, as an essential instrument for achieving social justice, equality, and empowerment. Therefore, the study seeks to understand how Dalit leaders perceive political participation, leadership, and their role in the welfare and upliftment of Dalit communities. The researcher approached the respondents through a carefully designed interview schedule consisting of both structured and unstructured questions. The structured questionnaire was primarily used for collecting quantitative and factual information regarding the socio-economic profile of the respondents. Variables such as caste, religion, gender, educational qualification, occupation, income, family background, political affiliation, and social status were included to prepare a comprehensive profile of the leaders. These variables help in understanding the social composition and economic conditions of Dalit political leadership in Maharashtra. At the same time, unstructured and open-ended questions were employed to understand the perceptions, experiences, and opinions of the leaders regarding various Dalit-related issues. These discussions provided deeper insights into the changing nature of Dalit leadership, political participation, caste relations, electoral politics, social movements, and the challenges faced by Dalit representatives in mainstream politics. The qualitative responses also helped in identifying ideological differences, leadership styles, and the extent of commitment toward Ambedkarite principles and Dalit empowerment. Maharashtra occupies a significant place in the socio-political history of Maharashtra. The region has witnessed the rise of several social reform movements, cooperative movements, peasant politics, and Dalit struggles. Despite the dominance of upper-caste and Maratha political elites in the region, Dalit leaders have gradually emerged as influential political actors through electoral participation, social mobilization, and party politics. The socio-economic background of these leaders reflects broader patterns of social change, educational mobility, urbanization, and political consciousness among Dalit communities. The chapter also includes selected case studies of Dalit political leaders who cooperated extensively during the field investigation. These case studies provide a more detailed understanding of the life experiences, struggles, political journeys, and ideological orientations of the respondents. Through these narratives, the researcher attempts to capture the complexities of Dalit political leadership beyond statistical

analysis. The personal experiences of the leaders reveal how caste discrimination, poverty, educational opportunities, social networks, and political mentorship shaped their political careers and leadership roles. However, the fieldwork also encountered certain limitations. Some leaders were reluctant to provide personal information and did not cooperate fully during the interview process. In certain cases, respondents avoided discussing sensitive issues related to caste conflicts, intra-party politics, financial status, and personal political strategies. A few leaders responded only partially to the interview schedule, while others declined detailed interaction. This non-cooperation and lack of response regarding personal details constitute one of the limitations of the study. Nevertheless, all respondents positively responded to the structured questionnaire, enabling the researcher to collect essential socio-economic data for analysis. The present chapter, therefore, aims to provide a systematic analysis of the socio-economic characteristics of Dalit political leaders in Maharashtra. By examining factors such as caste identity, educational attainment, occupational background, family status, political participation, and economic conditions, the study seeks to understand the nature and transformation of Dalit political leadership in contemporary Maharashtra. The chapter further explores how socio-economic factors influence political participation, leadership development, and representation among Dalit communities. In doing so, it contributes to a broader understanding of Dalit politics, democratic representation, and social transformation in Maharashtra and India as a whole. (Shah, 1975),(Mumtaz Ali Khan, 1980)

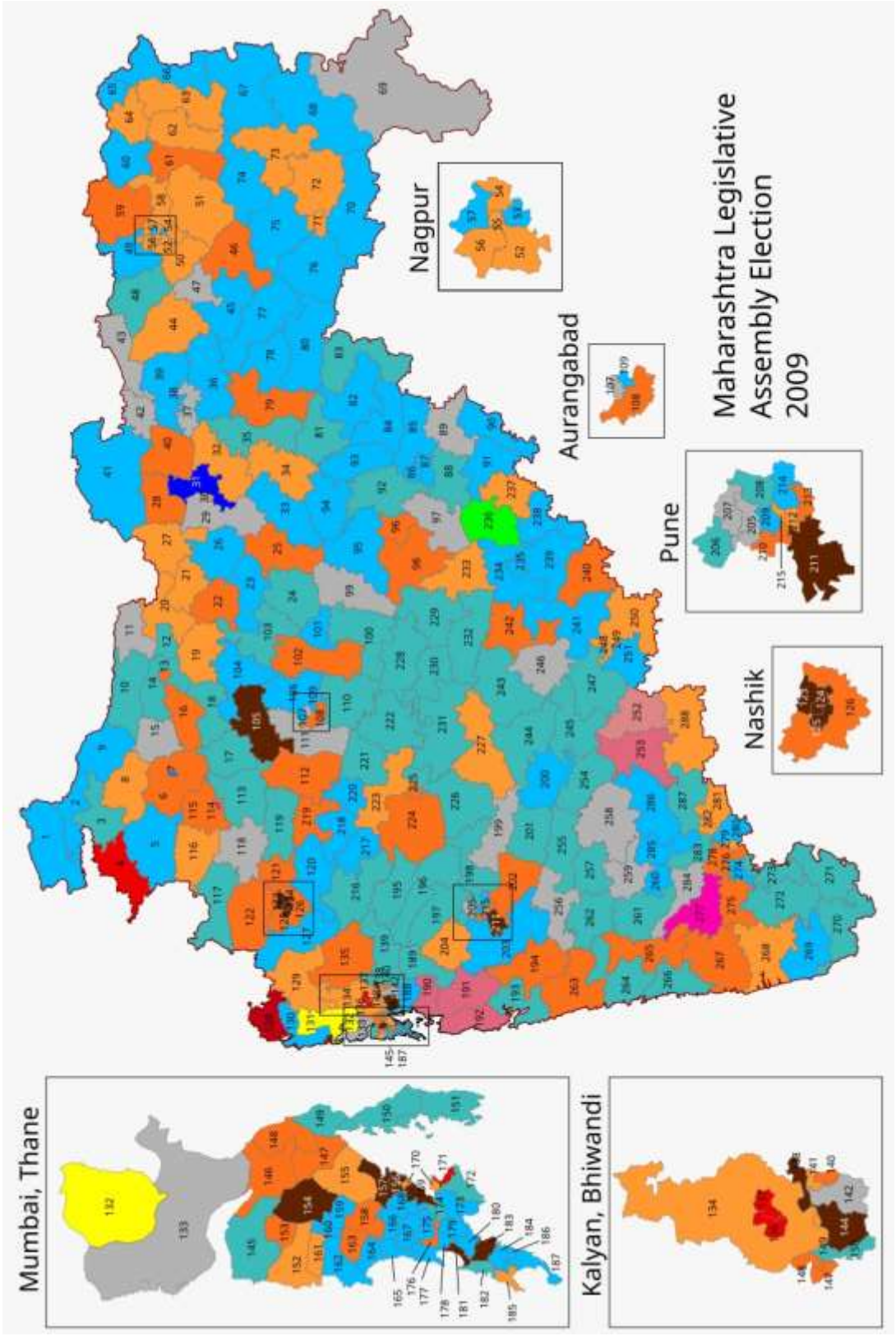
"महाराष्ट्र न्यायाधिकरण, पुणे खंडपीठ का भ्रमण करते हुए तथा न्याय, विधि और संवैधानिक मूल्यों की प्रक्रिया को समझते हुए।"

1. 1990 Maharashtra Legislative Assembly election



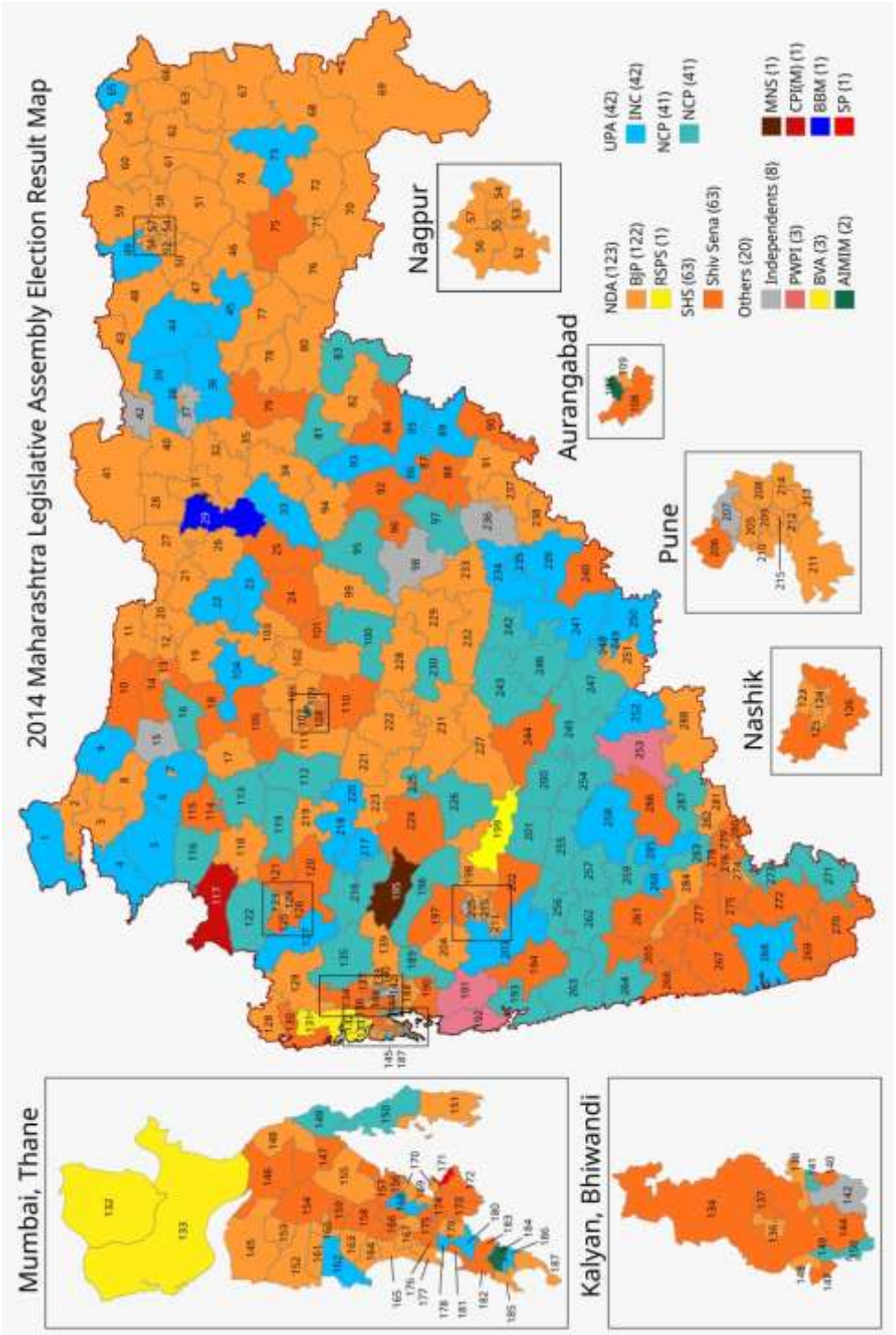
Source :-href="https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:1990_Maharashtra_Legislative_Assembl

2. 2009 Maharashtra Legislative Assembly election



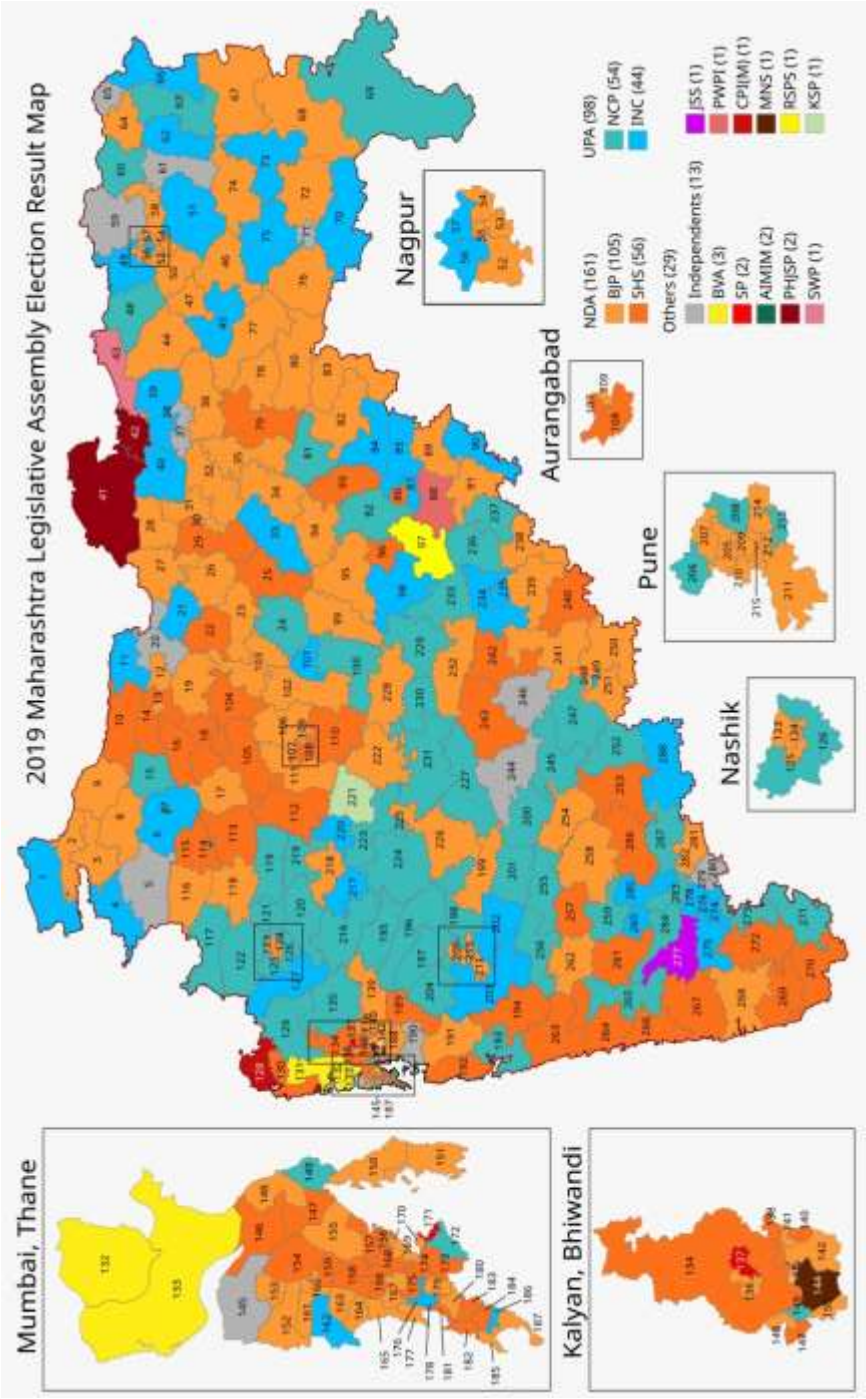
Source: - Compiled from secondary data collected from books, journals, government reports, websites, and published research studies. (Wikipedia contributors, n.d., https://www.wikipedia.org)

3. 2014 Maharashtra Legislative Assembly election



Source: - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2014_Maharashtra_Legislative_Assembly_election

4. 2019 Maharashtra Legislative Assembly election



Source:-
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2019_Maharashtra_Legislative_Assembly_election

Table No. 5.1 Identification of Dalit Political Leaders

Sr. No.	Types of Respondents	Dalit Leaders
1	All elected Dalit leaders from reserved constituencies for Members of Legislative Assembly (MLAs) in Maharashtra	22
Total		**22**

Source: Compiled from secondary data collected from books, journals, government reports, websites, and published research studies..

It is clear from Table No. 5.1 that all the respondents included in the study are Dalit political leaders elected from reserved constituencies as Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) in Maharashtra. These constituencies were officially declared as reserved constituencies for Scheduled Castes by the Election Commission of India. The respondents were elected as MLAs through the electoral process conducted during different election periods from 1995 to 2024. The data regarding their election and constituency status has been verified from the records and declarations of the Election Commission of India (**1995–2024).**

5.2 Socio-Economic Background of the Leaders

The socio-economic background of political leaders plays a significant role in shaping their political ideology, leadership style, decision-making capacity, and relationship with society. In the context of Dalit political leadership, socio-economic factors become even more important because these leaders emerge from historically marginalized and socially disadvantaged communities. Their educational status, occupational background, economic condition, family structure, and social experiences greatly influence their political participation and leadership patterns. The present study attempts to analyze the socio-economic background of Dalit political leaders elected as Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs) in Maharashtra. For this purpose, various dimensions such as age, gender, caste, religion, educational qualification, occupation, income, family background, political affiliation, and social status have been taken into consideration. These variables help in understanding the nature of Dalit political

leadership and the extent of socio-economic mobility among Dalit communities.The socio-economic profile of the leaders also reflects broader changes taking place within Dalit society due to education, urbanization, political awareness, reservation policies, and democratic participation. Many Dalit leaders have risen from economically weaker and socially marginalized backgrounds to positions of political authority through struggle, education, social movements, and party politics. Therefore, the study of their socio-economic conditions provides important insights into the process of political empowerment and social transformation among Dalits. In order to understand these aspects systematically, the present section examines different socio-economic characteristics of the selected Dalit political leaders through quantitative and qualitative analysis based on primary data collected during fieldwork. (Mumtaz Ali Khan, 1980)

5.2.1 District and Constituency-wise Distribution of the Dalit Political Leaders

The district and constituency-wise distribution of Dalit political leaders is important for understanding the geographical spread and political representation of Dalit leadership in Maharashtra. Reserved constituencies for Scheduled Castes are distributed across different districts of the state to ensure political participation and representation of marginalized communities in the legislative process. The selected respondents in the present study belong to different districts and reserved constituencies of Maharashtra. These leaders were elected from constituencies reserved for Scheduled Castes under the constitutional provisions and electoral arrangements made by the Election Commission of India. The distribution of respondents across districts reflects the regional diversity of Dalit political leadership and highlights the varying socio-political conditions influencing their emergence in electoral politics. The district-wise and constituency-wise analysis also helps in identifying the concentration of Dalit political leadership in particular regions and understanding the local political dynamics, caste composition, party support, and socio-economic factors responsible for the electoral success of Dalit leaders. Furthermore, it provides a broader perspective on the nature of Dalit political representation in Maharashtra.
(Wikipedia contributors, n.d., https://www.wikipedia.org)

Table No. 5.2.1 District-wise Name of the Assembly Constituencies in Maharashtra

Sr. No.	District	Assembly Constituencies
1	Ahmednagar	Akole (ST), Sangamner, Shirdi, Kopargaon, Shrirampur (SC), Nevasa, Shevgaon, Rahuri, Parner, Ahmednagar City, Shrigonda, Karjat Jamkhed
2	Akola	Akot, Balapur, Akola West, Akola East, Murtizapur (SC)
3	Amravati	Dhamangaon Railway, Badnera, Amravati, Teosa, Daryapur (SC), Melghat (ST), Achalpur, Morshi
4	Aurangabad	Sillod, Kannad, Pholambari, Aurangabad Central, Aurangabad West (SC), Aurangabad East, Paithan, Gangapur, Vaijapur
5	Beed	Georai, Majalgaon, Beed, Ashti, Kaij (SC), Parli
6	Bhandara	Tumsar, Bhandara (SC), Sakoli
7	Buldhana	Malkapur, Buldhana, Chikhli, Sindkhed Raja, Mehkar (SC), Khamgaon, Jalgaon (Jamod)
8	Chandrapur	Rajura, Chandrapur (SC), Ballarpur, Bramhapuri, Chimur, Warora
9	Dhule	Sakri (ST), Dhule Rural, Dhule City, Sindkheda, Shirpur (ST)
10	Gadchiroli	Armori (ST), Gadchiroli (ST), Aheri (ST)
11	Gondia	Arjuni Morgaon (SC), Tirora, Gondia, Amgaon (ST)

12	Hingoli	Basmath, Kalamnuri, Hingoli
13	Jalgaon	Chopda (ST), Raver, Bhusawal (SC), Jalgaon City, Jalgaon Rural, Amalner, Erandol, Chalisgaon, Pachora, Jamner, Muktainagar
14	Jalna	Partur, Ghansawangi, Jalna, Badnapur (SC), Bhokardan
15	Kolhapur	Chandgad, Radhanagari, Kagal, Kolhapur South, Karvir, Kolhapur North, Shahuwadi, Hatkanangle (SC), Ichalkaranji, Shirol
16	Latur	Latur Rural, Latur City, Ahmedpur, Udgir (SC), Nilanga, Ausa
17	Mumbai City	Dharavi (SC), Sion Koliwada, Wadala, Mahim, Worli, Shivadi, Byculla, Malabar Hill, Mumbadevi, Colaba
18	Mumbai Suburban	Borivali, Dahisar, Magathane, Mulund, Vikhroli, Bhandup West, Jogeshwari East, Dindoshi, Kandivali East, Charkop, Malad West, Goregaon, Versova, Andheri West, Andheri East, Vile Parle, Chandivali, Ghatkopar West, Ghatkopar East, Mankhurd Shivajinagar, Anushakti Nagar, Chembur, Kurla (SC), Kalina, Bandra East, Bandra West
19	Nagpur	Katol, Savner, Hingna, Umred (SC), Nagpur South West, Nagpur South, Nagpur East, Nagpur Central, Nagpur West, Nagpur North (SC), Kamptee, Ramtek
20	Nanded	Kinwat, Hadgaon, Bhokar, Nanded North, Nanded South, Loha, Naigaon, Deglur (SC), Mukhed
21	Nandurbar	Akkalkuwa (ST), Shahada (ST), Nandurbar (ST), Nawapur (ST)
22	Nashik	Nandgaon, Malegaon Central, Malegaon Outer, Baglan (ST), Kalwan (ST), Chandwad, Yeola, Sinnar, Niphad, Dindori (ST), Nashik East, Nashik Central, Nashik West, Deolali (SC), Igatpuri (ST)

23	Osmanabad	Omerga (SC), Tuljapur, Osmanabad, Paranda
24	Palghar	Dahanu (ST), Vikramgad (ST), Palghar (ST), Boisar (ST), Nalasopara, Vasai
25	Parbhani	Jintur, Parbhani, Gangakhed, Pathri
26	Pune	Junnar, Ambegaon, Khed Alandi, Shirur, Daund, Indapur, Baramati, Purandar, Bhor, Maval, Chinchwad, Pimpri (SC), Bhosari, Vadgaon Sheri, Shivajinagar, Kothrud, Khadakwasla, Parvati, Hadapsar, Pune Cantonment (SC), Kasba Peth
27	Raigad	Panvel, Karjat, Uran, Pen, Alibag, Shrivardhan, Mahad
28	Ratnagiri	Dapoli, Guhagar, Chiplun, Ratnagiri, Rajapur
29	Sangli	Miraj (SC), Sangli, Islampur, Shirala, Palus-Kadegaon, Khanapur, Tasgaon-Kavathe Mahankal, Jat
30	Satara	Phaltan (SC), Wai, Koregaon, Man, Karad North, Karad South, Patan, Satara
31	Sindhudurg	Kankavli, Kudal, Sawantwadi
32	Solapur	Karmala, Madha, Barshi, Mohol (SC), Solapur City North, Solapur City Central, Akkalkot, Solapur South, Pandharpur, Sangola, Malshiras (SC)
33	Thane	Bhiwandi Rural (ST), Shahapur (ST), Bhiwandi West, Bhiwandi East, Kalyan West, Murbad, Ambarnath (SC), Ulhasnagar, Kalyan East, Dombivli, Kalyan Rural, Mira Bhayandar, Ovala-Majiwada, Kopri-Pachpakhadi, Thane, Mumbra-Kalwa, Airoli, Belapur
34	Wardha	Arvi, Deoli, Hinganghat, Wardha
35	Washim	Risod, Washim (SC), Karanja

36	Yavatmal	Wani, Ralegaon (ST), Yavatmal, Digras, Arni (ST), Pusad, Umarkhed (SC)

Source: District-wise List of Assembly Constituencies, Maharashtra. (Wikipedia contributors, n.d., https://www.wikipedia.org)

Source: https://gkgsnotes.com/maharashtra-map-in-hindi/

5.2.2 Rural–Urban Nature of Constituencies of Dalit Political Leaders

India is traditionally regarded as a land of villages, and the social environment in which an individual lives has a deep influence on personality, attitudes, social relations, and political behavior. The rural–urban background of political leaders is therefore an important factor in understanding their socio-economic and political orientation. Rural and urban societies differ in terms of social structure, occupation, education, culture, lifestyle, and political awareness.

These differences significantly influence the nature of leadership and political participation. In caste studies, the rural–urban setting occupies a special importance because caste practices and social discrimination are generally more rigid and visible in rural areas as compared to urban areas. In villages, social relations are often governed by traditional caste hierarchies, customs, and practices, which affect the social status and opportunities available to marginalized communities such as Dalits. On the other hand, urban areas provide comparatively greater social mobility, educational opportunities, occupational diversification, and exposure to modern values. As a result, the intensity of caste discrimination tends to reduce in urban settings, although it does not disappear completely. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar strongly emphasized the importance of urbanization for Dalit emancipation. He advised Dalits to leave villages and settle in urban areas where they could achieve dignity, equality, and economic independence. According to Ambedkar, villages in India were centers of caste oppression and untouchability, whereas cities offered better opportunities for education, employment, and social progress. Urban life enables individuals to interact beyond caste boundaries and promotes democratic and modern social relations. The process of industrialization, urbanization, and economic development after independence encouraged many Dalits to migrate from rural to urban areas in search of employment and better living conditions. The Green Revolution and changing agricultural economy also contributed to this migration. Consequently, many Dalit political leaders who originally belonged to rural backgrounds gradually established themselves in semi-urban and urban settings. The rural–urban nature of constituencies also affects political leadership patterns. Leaders from rural constituencies often maintain close connections with agrarian communities and local caste dynamics, whereas urban leaders are more exposed to modern political institutions, party organizations, media, and administrative systems. Urban political environments generally encourage broader political participation and issue-based politics, while rural politics may continue to be influenced by caste loyalties and traditional power structures. Thus, the study of the rural–urban background of Dalit political leaders is important for understanding the changing nature of Dalit leadership, social mobility, and political consciousness in contemporary Maharashtra.

Table No. 5.2.2 Urban, Semi-Urban and Rural Constituencies of Dalit Political Leaders in Maharashtra

Area	**Number of Dalit Leaders**	**Percentage**
Urban	14	63.63
Rural	3	13.63
Semi-Urban	5	22.27
Total	**22**	**100**

Source: Compiled from secondary data collected from books, journals, government reports, websites, and published research studies.

5.2.3 Religious Faith of Dalit Political Leaders

Religion is an important aspect of human life and plays a significant role in shaping social values, cultural practices, beliefs, and political attitudes. In Indian society, religion occupies a central position and deeply influences social relations and community identity. The relationship between caste and religion is particularly significant in the Indian social system because caste hierarchies have historically been associated with religious traditions and practices. In Maharashtra, religion has also played an important role in the socio-political movements of Dalits. Dr. B. R. Ambedkar strongly criticized the caste-based inequalities and discrimination prevalent within Hindu society. He believed that social equality and human dignity could not be achieved within the traditional caste structure of Hinduism. Therefore, in 1956, Dr. Ambedkar embraced Buddhism along with lakhs of his followers at Nagpur. This historic conversion movement inspired many Dalits in Maharashtra to adopt Buddhism as a means of social emancipation, self-respect, and liberation from caste oppression. The spread of Buddhism among Dalits created a new socio-cultural identity based on the principles of equality, justice, rationality, and human dignity taught by Gautam Buddha. However, despite the influence of the Ambedkarite Buddhist movement, a large section of Dalit communities in Maharashtra continues to follow Hindu religious traditions and practices. In some cases, Dalit

leaders may ideologically support Buddhism and Ambedkarite values while officially continuing to identify with Hinduism. The religious faith of Dalit political leaders is important for understanding their social identity, ideological orientation, and cultural background. Religion also influences political mobilization, social movements, and community solidarity among Dalits. Different religious affiliations may shape the perspectives of leaders regarding social justice, caste discrimination, and political participation. The present study attempts to examine the religious faith of Dalit political leaders in Maharashtra. The findings reveal that the majority of Dalit political leaders belong to the Hindu religion, while a small proportion follow Christianity. Although Buddhism has historically influenced Dalit movements in Maharashtra, there is no official record indicating that the respondents in the present study identify themselves as Buddhists. Thus, the religious background of Dalit political leaders reflects the complex interaction between caste, religion, social change, and political identity in contemporary Maharashtra. (Kanshi Ram, n.d.)

5.2.4 Occupational Background of Dalit Political Leaders

Table No. 5.2.4 Father's Occupation of the Dalit Political Leaders in Maharashtra

Father's Occupation	**Number of Respondents**	**Percentage**
Agriculture	9	40.9
Business	5	22.7
Politics / Social Worker	8	36.3
Total	**22**	**100**

Source: Compiled from secondary data collected from books, journals, government reports, websites, and published research studies.

Interpretation of Table No. 5.2.4

Table No. 5.9 shows the occupational background of the fathers of Dalit political leaders in Maharashtra. The occupation of the family plays an important role in shaping the social status, economic condition, educational opportunities, and political orientation of individuals. The occupational background of the respondents' fathers reflects the socio-economic conditions

from which the Dalit political leaders emerged. It is evident from the table that agriculture was the major occupation among the fathers of Dalit political leaders. Out of the total 22 respondents, 9 leaders (40.9 percent) belonged to families whose fathers were engaged in agriculture. This indicates that a significant proportion of Dalit political leaders emerged from rural agrarian backgrounds. The table further reveals that 5 respondents (22.7 percent) belonged to families engaged in business activities. This shows that some Dalit families gradually moved towards occupational diversification and economic mobility through trade and business-related activities. Moreover, 8 respondents (36.3 percent) belonged to families associated with politics or social work. This suggests that many Dalit political leaders had early exposure to public life, social activism, and political participation through their family environment. Such backgrounds may have contributed to the development of leadership qualities and political awareness among the respondents. Overall, the findings indicate that Dalit political leaders in Maharashtra emerged from diverse occupational backgrounds. Agriculture, business, and social-political activities were the major occupational foundations of their families. The data also reflect the gradual socio-economic transformation and increasing occupational mobility among Dalit communities in Maharashtra.

5.2.5 Previous Occupation of Dalit Political Leaders

Occupation is an important indicator of the socio-economic status, economic stability, and social mobility of political leaders. The previous occupation of leaders before entering active politics helps in understanding their social background, professional experience, and economic conditions. It also reflects the process through which individuals move from occupational life to political leadership. Different occupational backgrounds influence the political outlook, administrative understanding, leadership qualities, and public relations of political leaders. The previous occupational background of Dalit political leaders is particularly important because Dalit communities have historically been denied access to education, skilled employment, and respectable occupations under the caste system. However, after independence, constitutional safeguards, reservation policies, industrialization, and urbanization created new opportunities for Dalits in different occupational sectors. As a result, many Dalits gradually entered professions such as agriculture, business, government service, industry, construction, and other modern occupations. The findings of the present study indicate that Dalit political leaders in Maharashtra were engaged in diverse occupations before becoming Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs). The occupational diversity reflects the changing socio-economic status and occupational mobility among Dalit communities. The

data reveal that agriculture and professional occupations were the major occupational backgrounds of Dalit leaders before entering legislative politics. (Dalit Panther Movement, n.d.)

Table No. 5.2.5

Previous Occupations of Dalit Political Leaders before becoming MLAs in Maharashtra

Occupations	**Number of Respondents**	**Percentage**
Government Job	1	4.5
Industry / Business	4	18.18
Agriculture	6	27.27
Profession	6	27.27
Construction	1	4.5
Kushan Business	1	4.5
Business	3	13.64
Total	**22**	**100**

Source: Compiled from secondary data collected from books, journals, government reports, websites, and published research studies.

Interpretation of Table No. 5.2.5

Table No. 5.10 presents the previous occupations of Dalit political leaders in Maharashtra before they became Members of the Legislative Assembly (MLAs). The table reveals that Dalit leaders were associated with a variety of occupations prior to entering active politics, indicating socio-economic diversification among Dalit communities. It is evident from the table that agriculture and professional occupations were the major previous occupations of Dalit political leaders. Out of the total 22 respondents, 6 leaders (27.27 percent) were engaged in agriculture, while another 6 leaders (27.27 percent) belonged to different professions before entering politics. This indicates that a significant proportion of Dalit leaders emerged either

from agrarian backgrounds or from professional sectors. The table further shows that 4 respondents (18.18 percent) were associated with industry or industrial business activities. This reflects the growing participation of Dalits in entrepreneurial and industrial sectors due to economic development and urbanization. Similarly, 3 respondents (13.64 percent) were engaged in business activities before becoming MLAs. A small number of respondents were involved in government service, construction work, and Kushan business activities, each constituting 4.5 percent of the total respondents. These findings highlight the occupational diversity among Dalit political leaders in Maharashtra. The data suggest that many Dalit political leaders are economically stable and socially mobile individuals who entered politics after establishing themselves in various occupational sectors. The increasing participation of educated professionals, businessmen, and industrialists in politics indicates that contemporary politics has become a field associated with social status, public recognition, and influence. Thus, the occupational background of Dalit political leaders reflects the changing socio-economic conditions, occupational mobility, and emergence of a politically active Dalit middle class in Maharashtra. (Mumtaz Ali Khan, 1980)

5.2.6 Land Holding of Dalit Political Leaders

Table No. 5.2.6 Land Holding of Dalit Political Leaders in Maharashtra

Sr. No.	Land Holding	Respondents	Percentage
1	Landless	5	22.7
2	Less than One Acre	1	4.5
3	One Acre to Two Acres	3	13.6
4	Two Acres to Four Acres	3	13.6
5	Four Acres to Six Acres	4	18.2
6	More than Six Acres and Less than Ten Acres	6	27.3
Total		**22**	**100**

Source: Compiled from secondary data collected from books, journals, government reports, websites, and published research studies.

Interpretation of Table No. 5.2.6

Table No. 5.11 presents the landholding pattern of Dalit political leaders in Maharashtra. The data indicate that the respondents possess comparatively small and moderate landholdings, and none of them can be categorized as large landlords. It is evident from the table that 6 respondents (27.3 percent) possess more than six acres and less than ten acres of land. This constitutes the highest proportion among the respondents. On the other hand, 5 respondents (22.7 percent) are landless, indicating that a significant section of Dalit political leaders still does not possess agricultural land. The table further reveals that 3 respondents (13.6 percent) possess one to two acres of land, while another 3 respondents (13.6 percent) hold two to four acres of land. Moreover, 4 respondents (18.2 percent) possess four to six acres of land, whereas only 1 respondent (4.5 percent) owns less than one acre of land. The findings suggest that although some Dalit political leaders have achieved moderate economic stability through land ownership, a considerable number still possess either very small landholdings or no land at all. The overall pattern indicates limited land ownership among Dalit leaders in Maharashtra. Thus, the landholding pattern reflects the historical socio-economic disadvantages faced by Dalit communities as well as the gradual economic mobility achieved through education, reservation policies, political participation, and occupational diversification. (Mumtaz Ali Khan, 1980)

5.2.7 Annual Income of Dalit Political Leaders Table No. 5.2.7 Annual Income of Dalit Political Leaders in Maharashtra

Annual Income	**Number of Respondents**	**Percentage**
Less than Rs. 10 Lakh	1	4.5
Rs. 10 Lakh to Rs. 20 Lakh	2	9.1
Rs. 20 Lakh to Rs. 30 Lakh	4	18.2
Rs. 30 Lakh to Rs. 40 Lakh	3	13.6
Rs. 40 Lakh to Rs. 50 Lakh	1	4.5
More than Rs. 50 Lakh	11	50
Total	**22**	**100**

.

Source: Compiled from secondary data collected from books, journals, government reports, websites, and published research studies.

Interpretation of Table No. 5.2.7

Table No. 5.12 presents the annual income distribution of Dalit political leaders in Maharashtra. The data reveal significant variations in the income levels of the respondents and indicate the changing economic status of Dalit political leadership. It is evident from the table that the majority of the Dalit political leaders belong to higher income categories. Out of the total 22 respondents, 11 leaders (50.0 percent) reported an annual income of more than Rs. 50 lakh. This constitutes the largest proportion among the respondents and indicates that a considerable section of Dalit political leaders is economically well established. The table further shows that 4 respondents (18.2 percent) reported annual income between Rs. 20 lakh and Rs. 30 lakh, while 3 respondents (13.6 percent) belonged to the income group of Rs. 30 lakh to Rs. 40 lakh. In addition, 2 respondents (9.1 percent) reported annual income between Rs. 10 lakh and Rs. 20 lakh. Only 1 respondent (4.5 percent) reported annual income below Rs. 10 lakh, and another 1 respondent (4.5 percent) belonged to the income category of Rs. 40 lakh to Rs. 50 lakh. The findings suggest that economic strength has become an important factor in political leadership and electoral politics. Financially stable leaders possess greater opportunities for political participation, election campaigning, organizational activities, and maintaining public influence. The higher income levels among many Dalit political leaders also reflect the growing socio-economic mobility and emergence of an economically stronger section within Dalit communities in Maharashtra. Thus, the annual income profile of Dalit political leaders indicates significant economic advancement among a considerable proportion of respondents and highlights the increasing importance of economic resources in contemporary politics. (Mumtaz Ali Khan, 1980)

5.2.8 Political Experience of Dalit Political Leaders

Table No. 5.2.8 Political Experience of Dalit Political Leaders in Maharashtra

Sr. No.	Experience	Respondents	Percentage
1	Newcomers (Up to 5 Years)	11	50
2	Middle Range (Up to 10 Years)	6	27.2
3	Long-Term (Up to 15 Years)	4	18.1

4	Long-Term (Up to 20 Years)	1	4.5
Total		**22**	**100**

Source: Compiled from secondary data collected from books, journals, government reports, websites, and published research studies.

Interpretation of Table No. 5.2.8

Table No. 5.13 presents the political experience of Dalit political leaders in Maharashtra. The data indicate variations in the level of political experience among the respondents and highlight the presence of both new and experienced leaders in Dalit politics. It is evident from the table that 11 respondents (50.0 percent) are newcomers in politics with political experience of up to five years. This constitutes the largest proportion among the respondents and suggests the emergence of a new generation of Dalit political leadership. These leaders have recently entered electoral politics and public life. The table further reveals that 6 respondents (27.2 percent) possess political experience of up to ten years and belong to the middle range category. These leaders have gained moderate political exposure and experience through participation in party activities and public affairs. In addition, 4 respondents (18.1 percent) have political experience of up to fifteen years and can be considered long-term participants in politics. These leaders have performed different responsibilities at party and governmental levels and possess comparatively greater political understanding and organizational experience. Only 1 respondent (4.5 percent) reported political experience of up to twenty years. Such leaders possess extensive experience in politics and are well acquainted with political activities, party functioning, and governance processes. Overall, the findings indicate that a large proportion of Dalit political leadership in Maharashtra consists of relatively new entrants in politics. The dominance of newcomers suggests changing political participation patterns and the emergence of fresh leadership within Dalit communities. At the same time, the presence of experienced leaders ensures continuity, political guidance, and organizational stability in Dalit politics.

5.2.9 Membership of Social Organizations or Groups

Table No. 5.2.9 Membership in Social Organizations or Groups among Dalit Political Leaders in Maharashtra

Sr. No.	Membership / Movement Participation	Respondents	Percentage
1	No Membership in Any Social Group	7	31.8
2	Student Council	2	9
3	Youth Congress	3	13.6
4	Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP)	1	4.5
5	All India Students' Federation of India (ASFI)	3	13.6
6	Vidrohi Chalval (Rebel Movement)	2	9
7	Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Vichar Manch	3	13.6
8	Dalit Shoshit Samaj Sangharsh Samiti (DS4)	1	4.5
Total		**22**	**100**

Source: Compiled from secondary data collected from books, journals, government reports, websites, and published research studies.

Interpretation of Table No. 5.2.9

Table No. 5.16 presents the membership of Dalit political leaders in various social organizations and groups in Maharashtra. The data indicate that a majority of the respondents had some form of association with social or ideological organizations before or during their political careers. It is evident from the table that 15 respondents were associated with different social organizations, while 7 respondents (31.8 percent) reported no membership in any social group. This suggests that a significant proportion of Dalit political leaders emerged through

participation in social movements and community organizations. The table further reveals that 3 respondents (13.6 percent) each were associated with Youth Congress, All India Students' Federation of India (ASFI), and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Vichar Manch. These organizations appear to have played an important role in shaping the political and social consciousness of Dalit leaders. In addition, 2 respondents (9.0 percent) each were associated with Student Council and Vidrohi Chalval (Rebel Movement). Only 1 respondent (4.5 percent) each reported membership in Akhil Bharatiya Vidyarthi Parishad (ABVP) and Dalit Shoshit Samaj Sangharsh Samiti (DS4). The findings suggest that social organizations have contributed significantly to the emergence of Dalit political leadership in Maharashtra. Participation in student movements, youth organizations, Ambedkarite groups, and social reform movements provided opportunities for leadership development, political socialization, and public engagement among Dalit leaders. Thus, the association between social organizations and politics reflects the important role of social movements and community-based activism in the development of Dalit political leadership in Maharashtra.

"राजमाता जिजाबाई स्मारक का भ्रमण करते हुए एवं उनके साहस, दूरदर्शिता और राष्ट्रनिर्माण के आदर्शों को नमन करते हुए।"

5.2.10 Source of Political Inspiration of Dalit Political Leaders

Table No.5.2.10 Source of Political Inspiration of the Dalit Leaders

Sr. No.	Source of Political and Social Inspiration	Respondents	Percentage
1	Family Political Background	6	27.2
2	At the Behest of High-Caste Leaders	7	31.8
3	Due to Reservation Facility for Scheduled Castes	6	27.2
4	Inspired by the Thoughts of Phule, Shahu, and Ambedkar in Youth	2	9
5	From Local Body Elections	1	4.5
Total		**22**	**100**

Source: Compiled from secondary data collected from books, journals, government reports, websites, and published research studies..

Interpretation of Table No. 5.2.10

Table No. 5.17 presents the major sources of political inspiration among Dalit political leaders in Maharashtra. The data indicate that respondents entered political life through different social, political, and ideological influences. It is evident from the table that 7 respondents (31.8 percent) were inspired or encouraged by high-caste political leaders. This constitutes the largest proportion among the respondents and reflects the influence of dominant political leadership and party structures in shaping Dalit political participation. The table further reveals that 6 respondents (27.2 percent) each entered politics due to family political background and reservation facilities for Scheduled Castes. Family political background provided early political exposure and leadership opportunities, while reservation policies created institutional access for Dalits to participate in democratic politics. Only 2 respondents (9.0 percent) reported that they were inspired by the ideas and thoughts of Mahatma Phule, Rajarshi Shahu Maharaj, and Dr. B. R. Ambedkar during their youth. These social reformers

played a significant role in promoting social justice, equality, and empowerment of marginalized communities in Maharashtra. In addition, 1 respondent (4.5 percent) reported entering politics through participation in local body elections. This indicates that local self-government institutions also serve as important platforms for the emergence of political leadership. Overall, the findings suggest that Dalit political leadership in Maharashtra has emerged through multiple sources of inspiration including family influence, reservation policies, ideological movements, and support from mainstream political networks. The data also indicate that practical political opportunities and social connections have played a major role in the political advancement of Dalit leaders.

5.2.11 Nexus between Family and Politics

Table No. 5.2.11 Nexus between Family and Politics among Dalit Political Leaders in Maharashtra

Sr. No.	Blood Relatives Involved in Politics	Respondents	Percentage
1	Not Applicable	16	72.7
2	Brother	1	4.5
3	Sons	5	22.7
Total	**22**	**100**	

Source: Compiled from secondary data collected from books, journals, government reports, websites, and published research studies.

Interpretation of Table No. 5.2.11

Table No. 5.18 presents the relationship between family and politics among Dalit political leaders in Maharashtra. The data indicate that a majority of the respondents do not possess a strong family-based political nexus. It is evident from the table that 16 respondents (72.7 percent) stated that no family or blood relationship influenced their entry into politics. This suggests that most Dalit political leaders emerged through their individual political efforts, social participation, and personal leadership qualities rather than through family political inheritance. The table further reveals that 5 respondents (22.7 percent) reported that their sons

were involved in politics, while 1 respondent (4.5 percent) stated that his brother was associated with political activities. These findings indicate the presence of limited family-based political participation among some respondents. The data suggest that dynastic or family-centered politics is comparatively less prominent among Dalit political leaders in Maharashtra. Unlike mainstream elite politics, where political leadership often passes through family networks, Dalit political leadership appears to be more individual-centered and struggle-oriented. Thus, the findings highlight that the political identity of many Dalit leaders is primarily based on personal achievement, social activism, and community engagement rather than hereditary political influence. This reflects the democratic and socially mobile nature of Dalit political leadership in Maharashtra.

Socio-Economic Background of Dalit Political Leaders in Maharashtra

The present chapter attempts to analyze the socio-economic background of Dalit political leaders and their emergence in politics. The formal Dalit leadership has been identified in terms of Members of Legislative Assembly (MLAs) elected from Scheduled Caste reserved constituencies in Maharashtra. The study is based on 22 respondents who occupied political positions through reserved constituencies. The study reveals that the constituencies of the respondents are categorized into urban, semi-urban, and rural areas. A majority of the constituencies are urban in nature, followed by semi-urban and rural constituencies. It is also observed that most Dalit political leaders reside in urban areas even though several of them were elected from rural constituencies. Urban residence provides better opportunities for education, political participation, communication, and social mobility. In terms of religion, the majority of the respondents belong to Hinduism, while a very small proportion follows Christianity. Although Ambedkarite ideology and Buddhism have influenced Dalit movements in Maharashtra, none of the respondents officially identified themselves as Buddhists during the field investigation. The age profile of the respondents indicates that most Dalit political leaders belong to the middle-age category. The majority of leaders fall within the age group of 46 to 55 years, while very few young leaders are actively represented in politics. This suggests that Dalit political leadership in Maharashtra is still largely dominated by middle-aged and experienced individuals.The gender composition of respondents shows complete male dominance in Dalit political leadership. All the respondents included in the study are male leaders. This reflects the persistence of patriarchal attitudes within political parties and society, where women continue to receive fewer opportunities in electoral politics despite constitutional guarantees of equality. The caste composition of the

respondents reveals that the majority belong to the Matang community, followed by Chambhar and Mahar communities. Although the Mahar population is comparatively larger among Dalit communities in Maharashtra, their political representation among the respondents was comparatively lower.The educational background of the respondents indicates that all Dalit political leaders are educated, and none of them are illiterate. Many respondents possess professional qualifications, graduate degrees, and postgraduate education. This reflects the growing awareness regarding the importance of education among Dalit communities for social upliftment and political empowerment. The occupational background of the respondents and their fathers reflects significant socio-economic transformation among Dalit communities. The occupational background of fathers was mainly associated with agriculture, social work, and politics, whereas the respondents themselves were engaged in diverse occupations such as agriculture, professional services, industrial activities, business, construction, and government service before entering politics. The landholding pattern of respondents shows that none of the respondents can be categorized as landlords. A considerable proportion of respondents are either landless or possess small and moderate landholdings. This indicates that land ownership among Dalit political leaders remains limited despite socio-economic mobility. The annual income profile reveals that a significant number of respondents belong to higher income categories, with many reporting annual incomes above Rs. 50 lakh. This indicates the emergence of an economically stable and middle-class section among Dalit political leaders in Maharashtra. The political experience of respondents indicates that many Dalit leaders are relatively new entrants into politics. About half of the respondents possess political experience of only up to five years, while a smaller proportion have long-term political experience. This reflects the emergence of new Dalit political leadership in Maharashtra. The study also highlights that many respondents are associated with social organizations and community groups. Several leaders initially worked as social activists before entering formal politics. Organizations such as Youth Congress, ASFI, and Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Vichar Manch played important roles in developing political awareness and leadership among respondents. The sources of political inspiration among respondents include family political background, support from upper-caste political leaders, reservation policies, ideological influence of Phule, Shahu, and Ambedkar, and participation in local body politics. The findings indicate that multiple social and political factors contributed to the emergence of Dalit political leadership. The analysis further reveals that party loyalty among respondents remains relatively strong, as most leaders continued to remain associated with their parent political parties. Kinship ties and family relations also play some role in political advancement, although Dalit politics appears

to be less dynastic in nature compared to mainstream elite politics. Overall, the study shows that Dalit political leaders in Maharashtra emerged largely through social activities, educational advancement, political participation, and democratic opportunities rather than through inherited wealth or strong family political backgrounds. After becoming MLAs, many leaders gradually transformed from social activists into public representatives within formal political institutions. (Dalit Panther Movement, n.d.) (Rajni Kothari, n.d.)

CHAPTER VI

DALIT POLITICAL LEADERSHIP IN MAHARASHTRA: IDEOLOGY, REPRESENTATION AND TRANSFORMATION

"छत्रपति शिवाजी महाराज के स्वराज्य और राष्ट्रसेवा के विचारों में कुछ क्षण आत्ममंथन करते हुए।"

6.1 Introduction

As a historical fact, the process of developing Dalit self-respect and integrating Dalits into mainstream electoral politics was initiated by B. R. Ambedkar. He emphasized the idea that Dalits must become a "ruling community" in order to attain dignity, equality, and an honourable social life in India. Inspired by his ideology, several leaders such as Dadasaheb

Gaikwad, Prakash Ambedkar, Ramdas Athawale, Namdeo Dhasal, P. N. Rajbhoj, Sushilkumar Shinde, Chandrakant Handore, B. Basavalingappa, Mallikarjun Kharge, Kanshi Ram, and Mayawati emerged as prominent representatives of Dalit politics in parliamentary and legislative assembly elections during the post-independence period. This chapter focuses on the Maharashtra region and analyses the changing basis of Dalit political leadership through their association with different political parties during the post-independence era. The formation of the state of Maharashtra on 1 May 1960 marked a significant turning point in regional politics and representation. Between 1962 and 2024, fourteen Legislative Assembly elections were conducted in Maharashtra. During this period, a total of Dalit leaders were elected from reserved constituencies to the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly. The electoral participation of these leaders reflects the changing nature of Dalit political representation, leadership patterns, party affiliations, and ideological shifts over time. Initially, Dalit leadership was strongly influenced by Ambedkarite ideology and organizations such as the Scheduled Castes Federation and later the Republican Party of India (RPI). However, over the decades, fragmentation within Dalit parties, the rise of coalition politics, and the increasing influence of major political parties such as the Congress, Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Shiv Sena, and newer political alliances altered the basis of Dalit leadership in Maharashtra. The post-2014 and 2024 political developments in Maharashtra further transformed Dalit politics. The emergence of new alliances, divisions within traditional political parties, the rise of identity-based politics, and the growing role of social media and youth participation significantly influenced Dalit leadership patterns. Leaders associated with Ambedkarite movements increasingly adopted pragmatic electoral strategies by aligning with mainstream political parties to secure political representation and access to power. The chapter therefore examines how Dalit political leadership evolved from movement-oriented and ideology-based leadership to party-oriented and electoral leadership. It also analyses the socio-political factors responsible for these transformations, including caste dynamics, political alliances, reservation policies, factionalism within Dalit movements, electoral competition, and the changing socio-economic aspirations of Dalit communities in Maharashtra up to 2024. (Government of Maharashtra, n.d., https://maharashtra.gov.in/) (Wikipedia contributors, n.d., https://www.wikipedia.org

Table No. 6.1 Election Year-wise Dalit Leaders from 1962 to 2024

Sr. No.	Election Year	Total Seats of MLA in Maharashtra	Total No. of SC Reserved Seats in Maharashtra	Percentage	Total No. of SC Reserved Seats in Maharashtra Region	Percentage
1	1962	264	33	12.12	10	3.78
2	1967	270	15	5.55	6	2.22
3	1972	270	15	5.55	6	2.22
4	1978	288	18	6.25	7	2.43
5	1980	288	18	6.25	7	2.43
6	1985	288	18	6.25	7	2.43
7	1990	288	18	6.25	7	2.43
8	1995	288	18	6.25	7	2.43
9	1999	288	18	6.25	7	2.43
10	2004	288	18	6.25	7	2.43
11	2009	288	28	9.72	8	2.77
12	2014	288	29	10.06	8	2.77
13	2019	288	29	10.06	8	2.77
14	2024	288	29	10.06	8	2.77
Total		**3972**	**304**	**7.65**	**103**	**2.59**

Source:- Statistical Report on General Election,1962 to 2024 to the Legislative Assembly of Maharashtra.
(Government of Maharashtra, n.d., https://maharashtra.gov.in/)

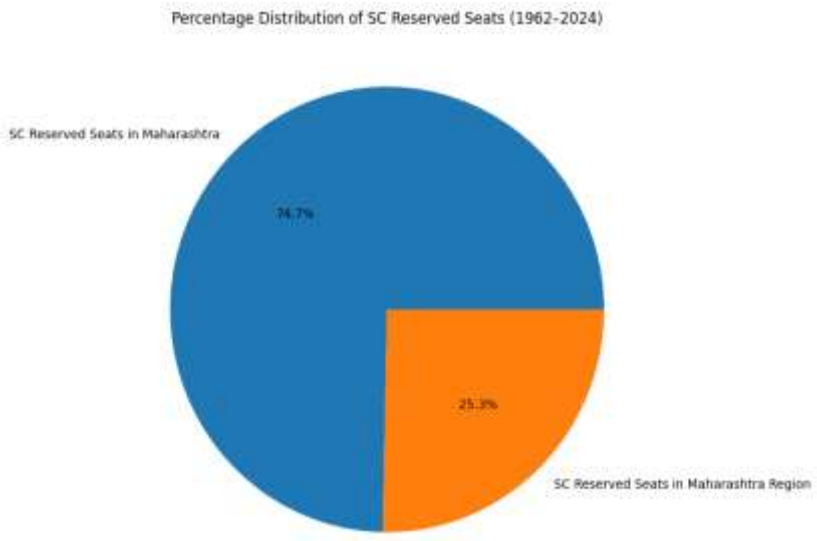

Percentage Distribution of SC Reserved Seats (1962-2024)
SC Reserved Seats in Maharashtra
74.7%
25.3%
SC Reserved Seats in Maharashtra Region

Table No. 6.2 Region-wise SC Reserved Seats in Maharashtra Legislative Assembly During 1962 to 2024

Year	Mumbai	Konkan	Maharashtra Region	North Maharashtra	Marathwada	Vidarbha	Total
1962	2	1	10	3	7	10	33
1967	1	-	6	1	4	3	15
1972	1	-	6	1	4	3	15
1978	1	-	7	2	5	3	18
1980	1	-	7	2	5	3	18
1985	1	-	7	2	5	3	18
1990	1	-	7	2	5	3	18
1995	1	-	7	2	5	3	18
1999	1	-	7	2	5	3	18
2004	1	-	7	2	5	3	18
2009	3	-	8	2	6	9	28
2014	3	-	8	2	6	10	29
2019	3	-	8	2	6	10	29
2024	3	-	8	2	6	10	29
Total	**23**	**1**	**103**	**27**	**74**	**76**	**304**
Percentage	**7.56%**	**0.32%**	**33.88%**	**8.88%**	**24.34%**	**25%**	**100%**

Source:- Statistical Report on General Election,1962 to 2024 to the Legislative Assembly of Maharashtra
(Government of Maharashtra, n.d., https://maharashtra.gov.in/)

The above table shows that Dalit leaders were elected from the Mumbai, Konkan, Maharashtra, North Maharashtra, Marathwada, and Vidarbha regions of Maharashtra. The highest number of Dalit leaders was elected from the Maharashtra region. A total of 103 (33.88%) out of 304 Dalit leaders were elected from this region during 1962 to 2024. This was followed by the Marathwada region with 74 (24.34%) Dalit leaders, while 76 (25%) Dalit leaders were elected from the Vidarbha region. From North Maharashtra, 27 (8.88%) Dalit leaders were elected. Similarly, 23 (7.56%) Dalit leaders were elected from the Mumbai region, whereas only 01 (0.32%) Dalit leader was elected from the Konkan region. There were 33 reserved constituencies for Scheduled Castes (SCs) out of the total 264 constituencies in Maharashtra during the 1962 Assembly election. However, in 1967, the total number of constituencies increased from 264 to 270, but the number of reserved constituencies for SCs sharply declined. As a result, only 15 constituencies remained reserved for SC candidates in the elections of 1967 and 1972. This indicates that a significant number of reserved constituencies were removed during this period. Consequently, Dalit politics became confined to a limited number of reserved constituencies. The reduction in reserved seats adversely affected the political participation and representation of Dalit communities in Maharashtra. The scope of Dalit political leadership and electoral participation was therefore considerably restricted during this period. However, after the implementation of delimitation and constitutional provisions related to political reservation, the number of SC reserved constituencies gradually increased in later years. By 2009, the number of reserved constituencies rose to 28, and further increased to 29 in the elections of 2014, 2019, and 2024. This expansion created greater opportunities for Dalit political participation and leadership across different regions of Maharashtra. (Wikipedia contributors (n.d.) explained that …)

SC MLAs from 1962–2024

Except during the 1962 Assembly election, in which there were 10 reserved seats, the reduced number of SC reserved seats later showed gradual recovery. The number of reserved seats remained 6 from 1967 to 1972, increased to 7 from 1978 to 2004, and further increased to 8 from 2009 to 2024 in the Maharashtra region. This trend is shown in Table No. 6.3.

Table No. 6.3 Showing the Number of SC Candidates Contesting in Maharashtra Legislative Assembly Elections against Reserved Seats (1962–2024)

Sr. No.	Year	Total Reserved Seats in Maharashtra Legislative Assembly	Total Reserved Constituency Seats in Maharashtra Region	Total SC Candidates Contested in Reserved Constituencies in Maharashtra Region
1	1962	33	10	48
2	1967	15	6	35
3	1972	15	6	27
4	1978	18	7	49
5	1980	18	7	47
6	1985	18	7	40
7	1990	18	7	84
8	1995	18	7	111
9	1999	18	7	58
10	2004	18	7	73
11	2009	28	8	130
12	2014	29	8	138
13	2019	29	8	113
14	2024	29	8	121
Total		**304**	**103**	**1075**

Source: Statistical Report on General Elections to the Legislative Assembly of Maharashtra, 1962–2024. (Election Commission of Maharashtra, n.d., https://ceo.maharashtra.gov.in/)

From the above table, it is evident that the number of aspirants among the Scheduled Castes in the Maharashtra Legislative Assembly elections has continuously increased over the years. This rise in the number of contesting candidates reflects growing political awareness, democratic participation, and political consciousness among Dalit communities. It also indicates the increasing aspiration of Dalit leaders to participate in mainstream electoral

politics and secure political representation. At the same time, the table also reveals intense electoral competition among SC candidates themselves. In many elections, multiple Dalit candidates contested from the same reserved constituency under different political parties or independent platforms. This fragmented political contest demonstrates the divided nature of Dalit politics in Maharashtra. Such divisions were largely influenced by factionalism within Ambedkarite movements, splits in the Republican Party of India (RPI), and the involvement of mainstream political parties in mobilizing Dalit leadership. This phenomenon represents a peculiar feature of Indian democracy, where the absence of a stable two-party system encourages multi-party electoral competition. Consequently, Dalit political leadership became diversified across several political parties and alliances. While this expanded democratic participation, it also weakened the possibility of unified Dalit political mobilisation in Maharashtra.

Table No. 6.4

Classification of Dalit Leaders of Maharashtra Vidhan Sabha According to Political Parties (1962–2024)

Year	Congress	BJP	Shiv Sena	NCP	Other Parties	Independents	Total
1962	31	-	-	-	RPI – 02	-	33
1967	14	-	-	-	-	1	15
1972	12	-	-	-	RPI – 01, FBL – 01	1	15
1978	4	-	-	-	JNP – 02, I.Cong. – 02, RPI – 02, PWP – 02, CPM – 01, RPK – 01	4	18
1980	10	-	-	-	PWP – 01, U.Cong. – 05, RPK – 01	1	18
1985	10	1	-	-	PWP – 02, Cong.(S) – 05	-	18

1990	8	3	1	-	PWP – 02, Janata Dal – 01, RPK – 01	2	18
1995	3	8	4	-	-	3	18
1999	4	6	3	3	-	2	18
2004	4	5	4	4	JSS – 01	-	18
2009	6	7	9	6	-	-	28
2014	2	15	9	3	-	-	29
2019	7	9	5	6	-	2	29
2024	5	11	6	5	VBA – 01	1	29
Total	**132**	**65**	**41**	**27**	**22**	**17**	**304**
Percentage	**43.42%**	**21.38 %**	**13.48%**	**8.88%**	**7.24%**	**5.59%**	**100%**

Source: Statistical Reports on General Elections to the Legislative Assembly of Maharashtra, 1962–2024. (Election Commission of Maharashtra, n.d., https://ceo.maharashtra.gov.in/)

Table No. 6.4 shows that Dalit leaders were elected from different political parties such as the Congress, Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Shiv Sena, other regional and ideological parties, as well as independent groups during the period from 1962 to 2024 in Maharashtra. The majority of Dalit leaders, that is 132 out of 304 (43.42%), belonged to the Congress party, indicating the long-standing dominance of the Congress in Dalit politics during the post-independence period. A total of 65 (21.38%) Dalit leaders belonged to the BJP, showing the gradual expansion of the party among Scheduled Caste voters, particularly after the 1990s. Similarly, 41 (13.48%) Dalit leaders were elected from the Shiv Sena, while 27 (8.88%) leaders belonged to the NCP. Dalit leaders were also elected through several other political parties such as the Republican Party of India (RPI), Forward Bloc (FBL), Janata Party (JNP), Peasants and Workers Party (PWP), Communist Party of India (Marxist) [CPM], Republican Paksha (RPK), Janata Dal (JD), Jan Surajya Shakti (JSS), and Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi (VBA). Altogether, these parties accounted for 22 (7.24%) Dalit leaders. Independent candidates secured 17 (5.59%) seats during the period from 1962 to 2024. The table clearly indicates that Dalit leaders entered different political parties having diverse political ideologies and organizational structures. Initially, Dalit leadership was primarily associated with Ambedkarite and Congress politics. However, over time, Dalit leaders increasingly joined mainstream national and regional political parties in order to gain electoral

opportunities, political power, and broader representation. This shift reflects the changing nature of Dalit political leadership in Maharashtra, from ideology-based mobilisation to pragmatic and party-centred electoral politics.

Table No. 6.5 Classification of Dalit Leaders from Maharashtra According to Their Political Parties (1962–2024)

Year	Congress	BJP	Shiv Sena	NCP	Other Parties	Independent	Total
1962	10	-	-	-	-	-	10
1967	6	-	-	-	-	-	6
1972	5	-	-	-	-	1	6
1978	3	-	-	-	JNP – 02, RPI – 02	-	7
1980	I. Cong. – 05, U. Cong. – 02	-	-	-	-	-	7
1985	Cong. – 05, Cong.(S) – 02	-	-	-	-	-	7
1990	5	-	-	-	-	2	7
1995	2	2	1	-	-	2	7
1999	2	2	1	2	-	-	7
2004	1	2	1	2	JSS – 01	-	7
2009	2	1	1	4	-	-	8
2014	1	2	2	3	-	-	8
2019	2	3	-	3	-	-	8
2024	1	3	1	2	VBA – 01	-	8
Total	**54**	**15**	**7**	**16**	**6**	**5**	**103**
Percentage	**52.42%**	**14.56 %**	**6.80%**	**15.53 %**	**5.82%**	**4.85%**	**100%**

Source: Statistical Report on General Elections to the Legislative Assembly of Maharashtra, 1962–2024 (Election Commission of Maharashtra, n.d., https://ceo.maharashtra.gov.in/)

The above table shows that 103 Dalit leaders were elected from the Maharashtra region from different political parties such as the Congress, Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Shiv Sena, other parties, and independent groups during the period from 1962 to 2024 in Maharashtra. Out of the total 103 Dalit MLAs, 54 (52.42%) belonged to the Congress Party, indicating the dominant role of the Congress in shaping Dalit political leadership in the region during the post-independence period. A total of 16 (15.53%) Dalit leaders belonged to the NCP, while 15 (14.56%) leaders were elected from the BJP. Similarly, 07 (6.80%) Dalit leaders were elected from the Shiv Sena. On the other hand, 06 (5.82%) Dalit MLAs were elected from other political parties such as the Janata Party (JNP), Republican Party of India (RPI), Jan Surajya Shakti (JSS), and Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi (VBA). Independent candidates accounted for 05 (4.85%) Dalit MLAs during this period. This table clearly indicates that Dalit leaders from the Maharashtra region increasingly entered various national and regional political parties. It reflects the gradual transformation of Dalit politics from a movement-oriented and ideology-based struggle to a broader electoral and party-centred political process. The participation of Dalit leaders in different political parties also demonstrates their efforts to secure political representation, leadership opportunities, and access to state power within the framework of parliamentary democracy.

"छत्रपति संभाजीनगर स्थित विभागीय आयुक्त कार्यालय में मराठा समाज के आरक्षण संबंधी मांगों के समर्थन में निवेदन प्रस्तुत करते हुए।"

Political Parties and Their Ideologies

The political parties functioning in Maharashtra and participating in electoral politics possess different ideological orientations. Generally, ideologies such as conservatism, liberalism, socialism, secularism, and radicalism can be identified among these political parties. However, within each ideological stream, considerable variations are also found. Therefore, Indian politics reflects a wide diversity of ideological positions and political approaches. From a sociological perspective, these ideological orientations influence the political behaviour of party members, supporters, and voters. Political parties differ in their ideological commitments, organizational structures, and policy objectives. Accordingly, political behaviour is largely shaped by ideological beliefs and socio-political interests. However, in practical politics, opportunistic political alliances and electoral strategies often weaken or dilute ideological commitments, resulting in contradictory political positions and changing party alignments. In Maharashtra politics, caste and class interests have played significant roles in shaping political alignments and undermining ideological consistency. Political parties frequently adjust their strategies to accommodate dominant caste groups, regional interests, and electoral calculations. Similarly, issues related to language, regional identity, and cultural sentiments also influence ideological positions and political mobilization. For example, regional identity and Marathi cultural politics significantly influenced the rise of the Shiv Sena, while social justice and anti-caste ideology shaped the politics of the Republican Party of India and other Ambedkarite organizations. Broadly speaking, the general masses are often influenced more by immediate political issues, leadership appeal, welfare measures, caste affiliations, and electoral strategies than by a detailed ideological understanding. Therefore, practical political considerations frequently become more influential than ideological principles. The major socio-economic issues and political problems faced by the state or nation also affect the relationships among political parties and socio-cultural organizations. Consequently, alliances and conflicts among political parties in Maharashtra have often been shaped by changing political circumstances rather than by fixed ideological commitments alone.. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2024_Maharashtra_Legislative_Assembly_election

Table No. 6.6

Political Parties and Their Ideologies

Sr. No.	Name of Political Party	Year of Establishment / Founder	Political Position	Ideology	Alliance
1	INC – Indian National Congress	28 December 1885, Allan Octavian Hume	Centre	Social Liberalism, Secularism, Nationalism, Big Tent	UPA, MVA, Secular Progressive Alliance
2	NCP – Nationalist Congress Party	10 June 1999, Sharad Pawar	Centre	Marathi Nationalism, Liberalism, Gandhism	UPA, MVA
3	BJP – Bharatiya Janata Party	6 April 1980, Atal Bihari Vajpayee and L.K. Advani	Right-Wing	Conservatism, Nationalism, Hindutva, Integral Humanism	NDA
4	SHS – Shiv Sena	19 June 1966, Balasaheb Thackeray	Right-Wing / Far-Right	Marathi Nationalism, Hindutva, Hindu Nationalism	NDA, MVA
5	REP – Republican Party	3 October 1957, N. Sivaraj	Left	Constitutionalism, Ambedkarism, Secularism, Egalitarianism	—
6	BSP – Bahujan Samaj Party	14 April 1984, Kanshi Ram	Left	Self-Respect, Bahujan Ideology	SAD (Punjab)
7	JSS – Jan Surajya Shakti	2004, Vinay Kore	Centre-Right	Regional Political Orientation	NDA Support
8	MNS – Maharashtra Navnirman Sena	9 March 2006, Raj Thackeray	Far-Right	Hindutva, Marathi Regionalism, Economic Nationalism	—

9	BBM – Bharip Bahujan Mahasangh	4 July 1994, Prakash Ambedkar	Centre-Left	Dalit Socialism, Secularism	Merged into VBA
10	SWP – Swabhimani Paksha	2004, Raju Shetti	Centre-Left	Liberalism, Agrarian Politics	UPA, MVA
11	BJS – Bharatiya Jan Sangh	21 October 1951, Syama Prasad Mukherjee	Right-Wing	Hindutva, National Conservatism	—
12	SWA – Swatantra Party	4 June 1959, C. Rajagopalachari	Centre-Right	Conservatism, Classical Liberalism	—
13	RPI – Republican Party of India	3 October 1957, N. Sivaraj and others	Left-Wing	Ambedkarism, Constitutionalism, Secularism	—
14	PSP – Praja Socialist Party	September 1952, Jayaprakash Narayan	Left-Wing	Socialism	Asian Socialist Conference
15	SSP – Samyukta Socialist Party	1964, Anantram Jaiswal	Left-Wing	Socialism	—
16	RPK – Republican Party of India (Kawade)	Jogendra Kawade	Left-Oriented	Ambedkarism, Republicanism	—
17	JNP – Janata Party	23 January 1977, Jayaprakash Narayan	Centre	Gandhian Socialism, Social Justice	—
18	PWP – Peasants and Workers Party	13-Jun-48	Left-Wing	Communism, Marxism	MVA, UPA

19	ICS – Indian Congress (Socialist)	1978, Sharad Pawar and others	Socialist	Socialism	—
20	JD – Janata Dal	11 October 1988, V.P. Singh	Centre-Left	Social Justice, Secularism	—
21	Lok Dal (B)	1974	Centre	Agrarian Politics	—
22	DDP – Doordarshi Party	24 March 1980, Baba Jai Gurudev	Social Reformist	Spiritual Growth, Social Reform	—
23	IUML – Indian Union Muslim League	1 September 1951, M. Muhammad Ismail	Centre-Right	Communitarianism, Conservatism	UPA
24	BBMS – Bharip Bahujan Mahasangh	4 July 1994, Prakash Ambedkar	Centre-Left	Dalit Socialism, Secularism	Merged into VBA
25	ABHS – Akhil Bharatiya Sena	1997, Arun Gawli	Regional	Regional Identity Politics	—
26	SP – Samajwadi Party	4 October 1992, Mulayam Singh Yadav	Left-Wing	Socialism, Social Democracy	Progressive Alliance
27	RPI (D) – Republican Party of India (Democratic)	T.M. Kamble	Ambedkarite	Constitutionalism, Dalit Rights	—
28	LJNSP – Lok Jan Shakti Party	28 November 2000, Ram Vilas Paswan	Centre-Left	Social Justice, Dalit Politics	NDA
29	RSPS – Rashtriya Samaj Paksha	2003, Mahadev Jankar	Regional	Agrarian and OBC Politics	NDA

30	RPSN – Republican Sena	21 November 1998, Anandraj Ambedkar	Ambedkarite	Social Equality, Ambedkarism	—
31	CPI (ML) – Communist Party of India (Marxist-Leninist)	22 April 1969, Charu Majumdar	Far-Left	Communism, Marxism-Leninism	—
32	ABHM – Akhil Bharat Hindu Mahasabha	1933, Madan Mohan Malaviya	Far-Right	Hindutva, Hindu Nationalism	—
33	AIMIM – All India Majlis-e-Ittehadul Muslimeen	2 March 1958, Abdul Wahed Owaisi	Right-Wing	Minority Rights, Constitutionalism	UPA (2008–2012)
34	AAAP – Aam Aadmi Party	26 November 2012, Arvind Kejriwal	Centre to Centre-Left	Anti-Corruption, Secularism, Humanism	—
35	VBA – Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi	20 March 2018, Prakash Ambedkar	Centre-Left	Ambedkarism, Social Equality, Secularism	—
36	BVA – Bahujan Vikas Aghadi	2009, Hitendra Thakur	Regional	Minority Rights	UPA, NDA, MVA

https://www.myneta.info/

(Election Commission of Maharashtra, n.d., https://ceo.maharashtra.gov.in/)

The political participation of Dalits in India represents one of the most significant developments in the democratic transformation of Indian society after independence. In the state of Maharashtra, Dalit political leadership emerged under the ideological inspiration of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, who emphasized political power as an essential instrument for achieving social equality, self-respect, and human dignity. Ambedkar believed that political representation was necessary for the protection of the rights of Scheduled Castes and for ensuring their participation in governance and policy-making processes. After the formation of Maharashtra state on 1 May 1960, Dalit political leadership gradually expanded through

participation in electoral politics. The Maharashtra Legislative Assembly elections became an important platform through which Dalit leaders entered mainstream politics. From 1962 to 2024, Dalit leadership in Maharashtra underwent major transformations in terms of political ideology, party affiliation, electoral participation, political alliances, and social representation.Initially, Dalit political participation was strongly associated with Ambedkarite politics and organizations such as the Scheduled Castes Federation and the Republican Party of India (RPI). However, over time, Dalit leaders increasingly joined mainstream political parties such as the Indian National Congress (INC), Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Shiv Sena, Nationalist Congress Party (NCP), Bahujan Samaj Party (BSP), and other regional and national political organizations. This transformation reflected not only changes in electoral politics but also wider socio-economic and political developments within Maharashtra. The rise of coalition politics, caste-based mobilization, factionalism among Ambedkarite groups, reservation policies, regional political movements, and changing political opportunities significantly influenced the nature of Dalit leadership. The present section analyses the changing pattern of Dalit leadership through different political parties elected in Maharashtra Legislative Assembly elections from 1962 to 2024. It examines the political participation of Dalit leaders, ideological shifts, electoral competition, role of political parties, and the social consequences of Dalit political participation in Maharashtra (Ghanshyam Shah, 1975)

"महाराष्ट्र के प्रसिद्ध जायकवाडी धरण (नाथसागर जलाशय) का दर्शन करते हुए।"

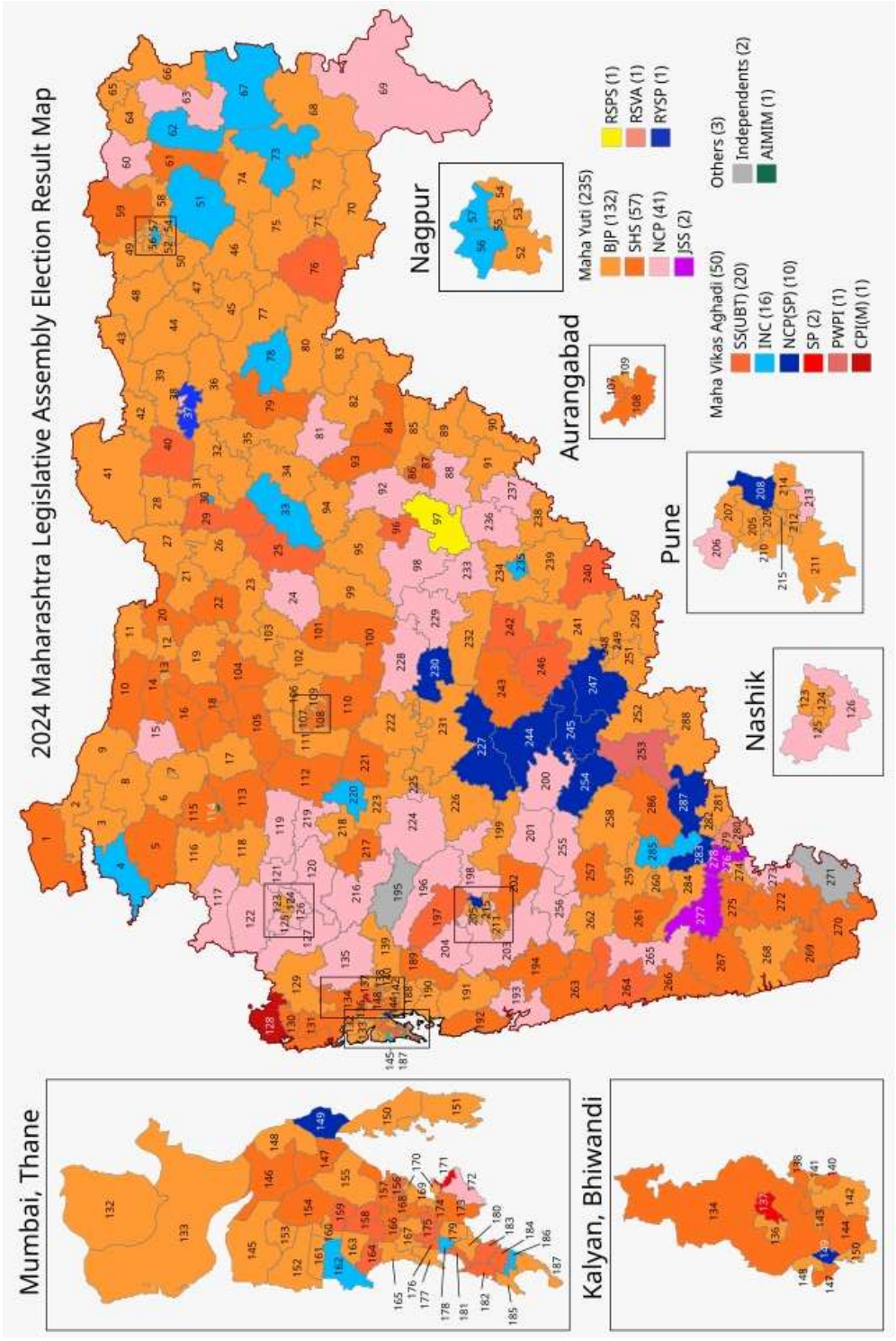
6.2 Change in Dalit Leadership through Different Political Parties Elected in Legislative Assembly Elections During 1962 to 2024

Table 6.6: SC Reserved Constituencies in Maharashtra (2009, 2014, 2019 & 2024)

Sr. No.	Constituency	2009	2014	2019	2024
1	Bhusawal (SC)	✓	✓	✓	✓
2	Mehkar (SC)	✓	✓	✓	✓
3	Murtizapur (SC)	✓	✓	✓	✓
4	Washim (SC)	✓	✓	✓	✓
5	Daryapur (SC)	✓	✓	✓	✓
6	Umred (SC)	✓	✓	✓	✓
7	Nagpur North (SC)	✓	✓	✓	✓
8	Bhandara (SC)	✓	✓	✓	✓
9	Arjuni-Morgaon (SC)	✓	✓	✓	✓
10	Chandrapur (SC)	✓	✓	✓	✓
11	Umarkhed (SC)	✓	✓	✓	✓
12	Deglur (SC)	✓	✓	✓	✓
13	Badnapur (SC)	✓	✓	✓	✓
14	Aurangabad West (SC)	✓	✓	✓	✓
15	Devlali / Deolali (SC)	✓	✓	✓	✓
16	Ambernath (SC)	✓	✓	✓	✓
17	Kurla (SC)	✓	✓	✓	✓
18	Dharavi (SC)	✓	✓	✓	✓
19	Pimpri (SC)	✓	✓	✓	✓
20	Pune Cantonment (SC)	✓	✓	✓	✓
21	Shrirampur (SC)	✓	✓	✓	✓
22	Kaij (SC)	✓	✓	✓	✓
23	Udgir (SC)	✓	✓	✓	✓
24	Umarga (SC)	✓	✓	✓	✓
25	Mohol (SC)	✓	✓	✓	✓
26	Malshiras (SC)	✓	✓	✓	✓
27	Phaltan (SC)	✓	✓	✓	✓
28	Hatkanangle (SC)	✓	✓	✓	✓
29	Miraj (SC)	✓	✓	✓	✓

Source: - Compiled from secondary data collected from books, journals, government reports, websites, and published research studies. **(Election Commission of Maharashtra, n.d., https://ceo.maharashtra.gov.in/)**

2024 MAHARASHTRA LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLY ELECTION



Source:-https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2024_Maharashtra_Legislative_Assembly_election
(Election Commission of Maharashtra, n.d., https://ceo.maharashtra.gov.in/)

Historical Background of Dalit Political Leadership

The roots of Dalit political leadership in Maharashtra can be traced to the social reform movements of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Reformers such as Mahatma Jyotiba Phule, Chhatrapati Shahu Maharaj, and Dr. B. R. Ambedkar played important roles in challenging caste oppression and promoting social justice. Among them, Dr. Ambedkar made the most significant contribution to Dalit political awakening. He organized Dalits politically through organizations such as the Independent Labour Party (ILP), Scheduled Castes Federation (SCF), and later inspired the formation of the Republican Party of India. Ambedkar emphasized constitutional democracy, political representation, educational empowerment, and social equality. After independence, the constitutional provisions related to reservation in legislatures created opportunities for Scheduled Castes to enter electoral politics. The reservation of Assembly constituencies for Scheduled Castes enabled Dalit leaders to participate in democratic institutions and represent marginalized communities. In Maharashtra, Dalit leadership initially emerged through Ambedkarite political ideology. However, after the death of Dr. Ambedkar in 1956, the Republican Party of India faced internal conflicts and factionalism. This weakened independent Dalit political mobilization and encouraged many Dalit leaders to join mainstream political parties. (Ambedkar, n.d.)

Dalit Representation in Maharashtra Legislative Assembly

The formation of Maharashtra in 1960 marked an important phase in the political development of the state. From 1962 to 2024, fourteen Legislative Assembly elections were conducted in Maharashtra. During this period, a significant number of Dalit leaders were elected from reserved constituencies. The number of Scheduled Caste reserved constituencies changed over time due to delimitation and constitutional provisions. In the 1962 election, there were 33 reserved constituencies for Scheduled Castes out of 264 Assembly seats. However, in 1967 and 1972, the number of reserved constituencies declined to 15 despite the increase in total Assembly constituencies. This reduction restricted the political participation of Dalits and confined their representation to a smaller number of constituencies. Later, after delimitation reforms and changing constitutional arrangements, the number of reserved constituencies gradually increased. By 2009, the number of reserved constituencies rose to 28, and from 2014 onwards, it increased to 29. This expansion created greater opportunities for Dalit political participation and representation. Consequently, the number of Dalit aspirants contesting elections also increased over time. (Dalit Panther Movement, n.d.)

Dominance of Congress in Dalit Politics

The Indian National Congress remained the dominant political party among Dalit leaders in Maharashtra for several decades after independence. Between 1962 and 2024, the majority of Dalit MLAs were elected from the Congress party. The Congress adopted an inclusive political strategy that incorporated various caste groups, minorities, and marginalized communities. Its ideology of secularism, social justice, and welfare politics attracted many Dalit leaders. The party also possessed a strong organizational network and political dominance in Maharashtra, making it the most viable electoral platform for Dalit candidates.

Many Dalit leaders joined Congress because it offered political opportunities, electoral support, ministerial positions, and access to state power. Congress leadership also strategically nominated Scheduled Caste candidates in reserved constituencies to maintain its social coalition. However, critics argued that Congress politics often accommodated Dalit leaders without fundamentally transforming caste hierarchies. Dalit representation within Congress was frequently dependent on upper-caste leadership and party discipline. Despite these limitations, Congress remained the principal political platform for Dalit leadership in Maharashtra for several decades. (Dalit Panther Movement, n.d.)

Republican Party of India and Ambedkarite Politics

The Republican Party of India represented the most important Ambedkarite political organization after the death of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. The party was established on the principles of constitutionalism, social justice, secularism, and equality. Initially, the RPI created strong political mobilization among Dalits in Maharashtra. The party sought to establish an independent Dalit political identity and challenge caste oppression. Leaders such as Dadasaheb Gaikwad, B. C. Kamble, R. S. Gavai, and others attempted to continue Ambedkar's political mission. The RPI became an important symbol of Dalit assertion and self-respect. However, internal factionalism, leadership disputes, ideological conflicts, and personal rivalries weakened the RPI over time. Several factions emerged within the party, including RPI (Athawale), RPI (Gavai), RPI (Kawade), and others. This fragmentation reduced the electoral strength of independent Ambedkarite politics. Many Dalit leaders eventually joined mainstream parties such as Congress, BJP, Shiv Sena, and NCP. Although the RPI continued to influence Dalit consciousness and social movements, its electoral influence remained limited. (Constitution of India, 1950)

Rise of BJP and Shiv Sena in Dalit Politics

The 1990s marked a major transformation in Maharashtra politics with the rise of the Bharatiya Janata Party and Shiv Sena alliance. The BJP promoted an ideology based on nationalism, Hindutva, conservatism, and economic liberalization. Initially, the party had limited support among Dalits. However, through social engineering strategies, welfare policies, and political alliances, the BJP gradually expanded its support base among Scheduled Castes. Similarly, Shiv Sena, which originally focused on Marathi regional identity and employment issues, later adopted Hindutva-oriented politics. The party also attempted to mobilize Dalit support through local leadership and political alliances. The BJP-Shiv Sena alliance became electorally successful in Maharashtra during the 1990s and early 2000s. Several Dalit leaders joined these parties due to changing political circumstances and electoral opportunities. The entry of Dalit leaders into BJP and Shiv Sena reflected the growing pragmatism in Dalit politics. Electoral success, political power, and ministerial opportunities became important considerations in political alignment. This period also reflected the decline of ideological rigidity in Dalit politics. Many Dalit leaders shifted from Ambedkarite independent politics towards mainstream party politics.(https://www.wikipedia.org)

"शिवाजी विश्वविद्यालय, कोल्हापुर स्थित डॉ. बाबासाहेब आंबेडकर संशोधन एवं विकास केंद्र का भ्रमण करते हुए तथा डॉ. बाबासाहेब आंबेडकर के शिक्षा, सामाजिक न्याय और मानव मुक्ति के विचारों को नमन करते हुए।"

Emergence of Nationalist Congress Party

The Nationalist Congress Party emerged in 1999 after a split within the Congress party under the leadership of Sharad Pawar. The NCP adopted an ideology emphasizing secularism, regional development, cooperative politics, and social justice. In Maharashtra, the NCP developed a strong rural political network, especially through cooperative institutions. Several Dalit leaders joined the NCP because it offered political opportunities within coalition governments and regional politics. The party nominated Dalit candidates in reserved constituencies and incorporated Scheduled Caste leaders into its organizational structure. The rise of the NCP further diversified Dalit political representation in Maharashtra. (According to Wikipedia contributors (n.d.), …)

Expansion of Multi-Party Politics

The growth of multi-party democracy significantly influenced Dalit political participation in Maharashtra. Apart from Congress, BJP, Shiv Sena, and NCP, Dalit leaders also entered parties such as the Bahujan Samaj Party, Janata Dal, Peasants and Workers Party, Communist Party, Samajwadi Party, Maharashtra Navnirman Sena, Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi, and other organizations. This diversification reflected increasing political awareness and expanding democratic participation among Dalits. However, it also contributed to fragmentation of Dalit political unity. Different Dalit leaders aligned with different political parties according to local caste equations, electoral opportunities, ideological commitments, and political strategies. Independent candidates also contested elections in large numbers. Although they often failed to win elections, their participation reflected the aspiration for autonomous political representation. Wikipedia contributors. (n.d.). 2024 Maharashtra Legislative Assembly election.

Wikipedia. https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/2024_Maharashtra_Legislative_Assembly_election

Electoral Competition and Fragmentation

One of the major features of Dalit politics in Maharashtra has been electoral fragmentation.

The number of Dalit candidates contesting elections increased continuously from 1962 to 2024. In several elections, multiple Dalit candidates contested from the same reserved constituencies under different party banners. This fragmented electoral competition weakened collective Dalit political strength. Radical and independent Ambedkarite candidates frequently divided votes among themselves, enabling mainstream parties to dominate elections. The absence of a unified Dalit political strategy reduced the possibility of creating a strong

independent Dalit political movement. In the 2019 and 2024 elections, numerous state-level and national-level political parties contested elections. However, major mainstream parties such as Congress, BJP, NCP, and Shiv Sena remained dominant in winning reserved constituencies. Radical parties such as the BSP and smaller Ambedkarite organizations struggled to secure electoral victories despite active participation.

Role of Reservation in Political Participation

Reservation of legislative constituencies played a central role in the emergence of Dalit political leadership. Political reservation created constitutional opportunities for Scheduled Castes to participate in democratic institutions. It enabled Dalit communities to gain representation in legislative bodies and articulate their social and economic demands. Dalit leadership strongly supported reservation because caste-based discrimination and social exclusion continued to exist in society. The persistence of caste hierarchy, social segregation, and economic inequality reinforced the need for political reservation. At the same time, reservation politics also created dependency on mainstream political parties. Since candidates required party support, many Dalit leaders became dependent on dominant political organizations for electoral success. Consequently, compromise-oriented politics emerged among sections of Dalit leadership. (Constitution of India, 1950)

Social Consequences of Dalit Political Participation

Dalit political participation produced important social consequences in Maharashtra. Firstly, electoral participation increased political awareness and democratic consciousness among Dalit communities. It encouraged political mobilization and participation in governance. Secondly, Dalit leadership brought attention to issues such as caste discrimination, untouchability, landlessness, unemployment, educational backwardness, and social injustice.

Thirdly, political participation strengthened the ideas of self-respect, dignity, identity, and constitutional rights among Dalits. Fourthly, Dalit political movements contributed to broader social movements for equality, human rights, and social justice. However, political participation also produced challenges such as factionalism, leadership conflicts, opportunistic alliances, and ideological compromise. Many Dalit leaders became integrated into mainstream political structures, reducing the possibility of autonomous radical politics. (Constitution of India, 1950)

Ideological Transformation of Dalit Leadership

Dalit leadership in Maharashtra reflected different ideological orientations including conservative, liberal, socialist, Ambedkarite, and radical perspectives. Initially, Ambedkarite politics emphasized social transformation, annihilation of caste, constitutional democracy, and independent political identity. Later, liberal and conservative political tendencies became more influential due to coalition politics and electoral competition. Many Dalit leaders adopted pragmatic political strategies by joining mainstream parties. Electoral success and political representation increasingly became more important than ideological consistency. This ideological transformation reflected broader changes in Indian politics where caste equations, political alliances, and electoral calculations often overshadowed ideological commitments. (Constitution of India, 1950)

Contemporary Trends in Dalit Politics

The period after 2014 witnessed significant changes in Dalit politics in Maharashtra. The rise of social media, youth activism, identity politics, and new political organizations reshaped political participation. Organizations such as the Vanchit Bahujan Aghadi attempted to revive independent Bahujan and Ambedkarite political mobilization. At the same time, mainstream parties continued to dominate electoral politics through alliances, coalition governments, and organizational strength. Dalit leadership increasingly balanced ideological identity with practical electoral considerations. The changing political environment also reflected the emergence of new issues such as economic inequality, privatization, unemployment, education, and social violence. Dalit youth movements, student organizations, and civil society activism continued to influence political discourse in Maharashtra. The period from 1962 to 2024 represents a significant phase in the evolution of Dalit political leadership in Maharashtra. During this period, Dalit leaders increasingly participated in Legislative Assembly elections through different political parties. Initially influenced by Ambedkarite ideology and independent Dalit politics, Dalit leadership gradually became integrated into mainstream electoral politics through parties such as Congress, BJP, Shiv Sena, NCP, BSP, and others. The expansion of political participation reflected growing political awareness, democratic consciousness, and aspirations for representation among Dalit communities. At the same time, fragmentation of Dalit politics, factionalism within Ambedkarite organizations, and dependence on mainstream parties weakened the possibility of unified independent Dalit political assertion. Reservation policies played an important role in creating opportunities for Dalit representation, but caste hierarchy and social inequality continued to influence political

participation. The ideological transformation of Dalit leadership from radical Ambedkarite politics to pragmatic party-oriented politics reflects broader changes in Maharashtra's political system. Despite challenges, Dalit political participation contributed significantly to social justice movements, democratic representation, and the assertion of constitutional rights in Maharashtra. (Constitution of India, 1950)

Thus, the changing pattern of Dalit leadership through different political parties demonstrates both the achievements and limitations of democratic politics in addressing caste inequality and social exclusion in contemporary Maharashtra. It has been observed that various dimensions of Dalit participation in electoral politics and their social consequences reveal an expanding involvement of Dalit leadership through different political parties in Maharashtra. However, this expansion has also resulted in the division of votes among numerous political parties and independent candidates. Consequently, Dalit political representation has often remained fragmented rather than united.Independent candidates and ideologically radical political groups have contested elections in many constituencies, but they have generally failed to secure electoral victories. One of the important reasons for their failure was the fragmentation of Dalit votes and the dominance of major national and regional political parties. The electoral data of the 2019 Assembly election indicates that seven state-level political parties and nineteen national political parties contested the elections. However, only major national parties such as the Nationalist Congress Party, Indian National Congress, and Bharatiya Janata Party succeeded in electing significant numbers of candidates. Radical parties such as the Bahujan Samaj Party could not secure even a single seat despite contesting elections. The social consequences of Dalit political participation can be understood in terms of increased visibility of Dalit issues, stronger articulation of exploitation and discrimination, and exposure of social oppression within democratic politics. Electoral participation also contributed to the development of self-respect, collective identity, political consciousness, and the continued struggle for human rights and social justice among Dalit communities. Such political developments may be attributed to changing socio-political conditions and contemporary electoral trends. During the 2014 Assembly election, a large number of Scheduled Caste candidates contested from reserved constituencies. This reflects a positive approach by political parties in nominating SC candidates in reserved constituencies. However, the absence of a united opposition strategy and fragmented electoral competition reduced the chances of success for many Dalit candidates. The persistence of caste-based and class-based hierarchical attitudes among upper caste groups has contributed to political segregation and isolation of Scheduled Castes in Maharashtra politics. As a result, Dalit

leadership continues to emphasize the importance of political reservation for securing representation and protecting their political space. Candidate selection by political parties is often guided by electoral calculations, caste equations, and strategic political interests rather than purely ideological commitments.This political dependence on dominant parties for electoral success has frequently compelled Dalit leaders to adopt compromise-oriented politics. Consequently, autonomous Dalit political assertion has often weakened within mainstream electoral politics. The pattern of political participation among Dalit leaders demonstrates the coexistence of conservative, liberal, and radical ideological orientations. Although Dalits have shown increasing participation in electoral politics, the absence of a unified political strategy and the fragmentation of Dalit political consciousness have weakened their collective bargaining power. Therefore, despite active participation in elections, radical and independent Dalit political forces have generally failed to secure significant electoral success. In contrast, conservative and liberal political parties have continued to maintain electoral dominance and political control in Maharashtra. (Lynch, 1974)

CHAPTER VII
DALIT LEADERSHIP IN MAHARASHTRA: SOCIAL, POLITICAL AND STRATEGIC CHANGESCHANGING

"महात्मा ज्योतिराव फुले जयंती के अवसर पर मेरे कार्यालय में 18 फुट ऊँची प्रतिमा स्थापित करते हुए तथा उनके शिक्षा, सामाजिक न्याय और समानता के विचारों को जन-जन तक पहुँचाने का संकल्प व्यक्त करते हुए।"

7.1 Introduction

The present chapter examines the changing nature of Dalit leadership in Maharashtra. As stated earlier, the entire chapter is based on empirical data collected from 22 Dalit political leaders from the region. The chapter has been broadly divided into five sections. The first section introduces the chapter and outlines the objectives and framework of analysis. The second section comprehensively discusses the various changes that have taken place among Dalit leadership in Maharashtra over time. For the purpose of analysis, a total of 25 indicators

were identified to assess the transformation in Dalit leadership within the study region. These indicators have been grouped into five major categories, namely:

1. Social and behavioural changes among Dalit leaders,
2. Changes in the strategic behaviour of Dalit leaders,
3. Changes in the political and administrative behaviour of Dalit leaders,
4. Economic changes in Dalit leadership, and
5. Changes in the personality and psychological orientation of Dalit leaders.

To examine social and behavioural transformation, 10 indicators were considered. Similarly, four indicators were used to analyse strategic behaviour. The study further employed four indicators to assess political and administrative changes and three indicators to understand economic transformation among Dalit leaders. The remaining four indicators were included under the category of personality and psychological changes in Dalit leadership in Maharashtra. In addition to analysing these dimensions, the chapter also highlights the perceptions, roles, and contributions of Dalit leadership in the socio-political context of Maharashtra. Further, the hypotheses formulated for the study are tested on the basis of empirical findings. Finally, the chapter concludes with a detailed summary of the major observations and findings. (Government of India, 1950)

Table No: - 7.1 Elections Yearwise Scheduled Caste MLAs during 1962–2024

No.	Year	No. of SC MLAs	Percentage	Total MLAs
1	1962	32	12.12%	264
2	1967	15	5.55%	270
3	1972	15	5.55%	270
4	1978	18	6.25%	288
5	1980	18	6.25%	288
6	1985	18	6.25%	288
7	1990	18	6.25%	288
8	1995	18	6.25%	288
9	1999	18	6.25%	288
10	2004	18	6.25%	288
11	2009	28	9.72%	288
12	2014	28	9.72%	288
13	2019	28	9.72%	288
14	2024	28	9.72%	288
Total		**304**	**8.23%**	**3972**

Source: - https://sec.maharashtra.gov.in/?utm_source=chatgpt.com
(Chief Election Commissioner of India, n.d., https://eci.gov.in/)

7.2 Changes in Building the Social Movements

Dalit leadership in Maharashtra has historically emerged from social movements that aimed at achieving equality, justice, dignity, and social transformation. The ideological inspiration provided by B. R. Ambedkar played a crucial role in shaping the nature of Dalit leadership in Maharashtra. Earlier Dalit leaders were closely connected with mass movements, public struggles, awareness campaigns, and collective social action. Their leadership was largely movement-oriented and based on direct interaction with marginalized communities. The theory of social movement leadership explains that leaders generally emerge through participation in collective struggles and community mobilization. In the context of Dalit society, social movements acted as instruments of empowerment and political awakening. Dalit leaders gained legitimacy and public support because they actively participated in protests against caste discrimination, untouchability, social exclusion, and economic exploitation. Thus, movement-building became the foundation of Dalit leadership. However, with the passage of time, significant changes have occurred in the nature of social movement participation among Dalit leaders. Contemporary Dalit leadership is increasingly shifting from agitation-based activism to institutional and political engagement. Earlier leaders focused more on social transformation through collective mobilization, whereas modern leaders often emphasize electoral politics, administrative participation, welfare schemes, and organizational management. This transformation reflects the broader process of political institutionalization of Dalit leadership. The decline in active movement-building can also be explained through modernization and political integration theories. As Dalit leaders entered formal political structures and government institutions, their roles gradually changed from social activists to political representatives and administrators. Leadership responsibilities, party politics, bureaucratic procedures, and electoral competition reduced the direct involvement of leaders in grassroots social movements. Consequently, the emphasis shifted from street-level mobilization to negotiation, representation, and policy-oriented approaches. Another important theoretical aspect is the professionalization of leadership. Earlier Dalit leaders often worked voluntarily for social causes with ideological commitment and collective responsibility. In contrast, contemporary leadership tends to be more career-oriented and politically strategic. Leadership is now associated with organizational authority, political networking, and access to state resources. This has altered the traditional activist character of Dalit leadership. The changing pattern also reflects transformations in society itself. Urbanization, education, media expansion, technological communication, and economic

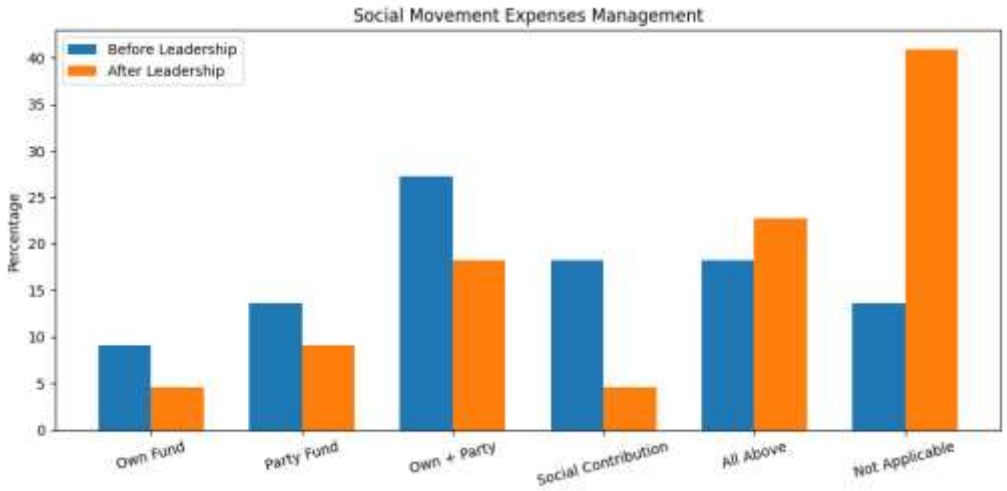
development have changed the methods of social mobilization. Social movements today are often organized through digital platforms, political organizations, and institutional forums rather than traditional mass agitations. Therefore, the nature of movement-building among Dalit leaders has become more formal, issue-based, and politically structured. Despite these changes, social movements continue to remain symbolically and ideologically important for Dalit leadership. The historical legacy of Dalit movements still provides identity, legitimacy, and moral authority to Dalit leaders in Maharashtra. Thus, while the methods and intensity of movement-building have changed, the influence of social movement ideology continues to shape the character of Dalit leadership. (Ambedkar, n.d.) , (Government of India, 1950)

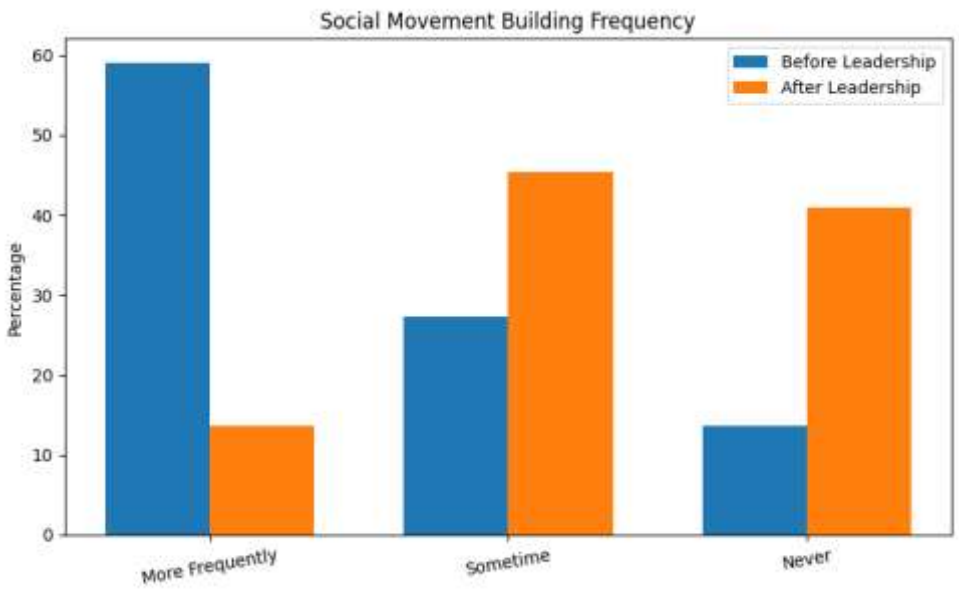
Table 7.2 Changes **in Social Movement Building Frequency and Expenses Management**

Variables	**Before Leadership**	**After Leadership**	**Changes**
Social Movement Building Frequency			
More Frequently	13 (59.09)	3 (13.64)	-10 (-45.45)
Sometime	6 (27.27)	10 (45.45)	4 (18.18)
Never	3 (13.64)	9 (40.91)	6 (27.27)
Total	22 (100)	22 (100)	—
Social Movement Expenses Management			
By Own Fund	2 (9.09)	1 (4.55)	-1 (-4.55)
By Party Fund	3 (13.64)	2 (9.09)	-1 (-4.55)
Own and Party Fund	6 (27.27)	4 (18.18)	-2 (-9.09)
By Social Contribution	4 (18.18)	1 (4.55)	-3 (-13.64)
All the Above	4 (18.18)	5 (22.73)	1 (4.55)
Not Applicable	3 (13.64)	9 (40.91)	6 (27.27)
Total	22 (100)	22 (100)	—

Source: Compiled from secondary data collected from books, journals, government reports, websites, and published research studies. (Chief Election Commissioner of India, n.d., https://eci.gov.in/)

Note: Figures in brackets indicate percentages to the total column.





After becoming leaders, the frequency of building social movements declined significantly by 45.45 percent. The data further reveal that the proportion of respondents who never participated in social movement building increased by 27.27 percent after assuming leadership roles. Similarly, the percentage of leaders who never engaged in building social movements increased considerably from 13.64 percent before leadership to 40.91 percent after leadership. This indicates that after becoming leaders, many respondents showed comparatively less interest in actively organizing and building social movements. Overall, the findings clearly demonstrate that the rate of social movement building among leaders declined substantially in the study region after attaining leadership positions. The table also presents the pattern of

social movement expenses management. It is observed that before leadership, 9.09 percent of respondents managed movement expenses through their own funds, which declined to 4.55 percent after leadership, showing a decrease of 4.55 percent. Likewise, the proportion of respondents depending on party funds also declined by 4.55 percent after leadership. The use of both personal and party funds for movement activities also decreased after leadership. Similarly, reliance on social contributions for managing movement expenses declined notably. However, the proportion of respondents using multiple financial sources ("all the above") increased slightly after leadership. At the same time, the category of "not applicable" increased considerably from 13.64 percent before leadership to 40.91 percent after leadership. Overall, the findings suggest that direct financial involvement of leaders in social movement activities reduced after attaining leadership positions. Although some leaders continued to utilize multiple funding sources, a substantial proportion of respondents were no longer directly engaged in financing or managing social movement activities after becoming leaders.

7.2.1 Changes in Efforts for Dalit People's Participation

"महाराष्ट्र के फलटण स्थित हमारे घर में महात्मा ज्योतिराव फुले एवं क्रांतिज्योति सावित्रीबाई फुले की जयंती श्रद्धापूर्वक मनाते हुए तथा उनके शिक्षा, सामाजिक न्याय और समानता के विचारों को स्मरण करते हुए।"

The participation of Dalit people in social work and in various government schemes, policies, and welfare programmes has undergone significant changes after the emergence of Dalit leadership. The data presented in Table 7.2 clearly indicate that the efforts undertaken by Dalit leaders have positively influenced people's participation at the village and community levels. Leadership has played an important role in mobilizing Dalit communities, spreading awareness regarding welfare schemes, and encouraging collective social action. The proportion of leaders reporting a high level of people's participation in social work increased considerably after becoming leaders. Before leadership, only 36.36 percent of respondents reported high participation, whereas after leadership the proportion increased to 54.55 percent, reflecting a positive increase of 18.18 percent. Similarly, the average participation rate also improved from 18.18 percent to 31.82 percent, showing an increase of 13.64 percent. On the other hand, the proportion of respondents reporting not-good participation declined sharply from 45.45 percent before leadership to only 13.64 percent after leadership, indicating a negative change of -31.82 percent. These findings demonstrate that Dalit leadership has been effective in improving public involvement in social work and developmental activities. The study further highlights various efforts undertaken by Dalit leaders to increase participation among Dalit people in government schemes and social welfare programmes. One of the major efforts was the organization of village-level awareness meetings regarding government schemes and policies. Before leadership, 63.64 percent of leaders were involved in such activities, but after leadership the proportion declined to 45.45 percent. A similar decline was observed in organizing community gatherings to spread awareness about government schemes, where participation reduced from 68.18 percent to 54.55 percent. This decline may indicate a shift from traditional awareness methods toward more modern and extensive communication strategies. In contrast, several other efforts showed substantial improvement after leadership. The use of advertisements and publicity regarding government schemes and policies increased from 72.73 percent before leadership to 86.36 percent after leadership. This indicates that leaders increasingly relied on public communication and media-based awareness techniques to inform Dalit communities about welfare opportunities. Meetings with Sarpanch and Gramsevak also increased significantly from 50.00 percent to 63.64 percent after leadership. This suggests that Dalit leaders developed stronger coordination with local governance institutions in order to ensure better implementation of schemes and greater participation of Dalit beneficiaries. Similarly, meetings with village-level Dalit social activists recorded the highest increase among all efforts. The proportion rose from 45.45 percent before leadership to 81.82 percent after leadership, reflecting an increase of 36.36 percent. This

finding indicates that Dalit leaders increasingly emphasized grassroots networking and collaboration with local activists to strengthen community mobilization. However, the frequency of visiting villages where participation in social work and government schemes was low declined from 36.36 percent to 18.18 percent after leadership. This decline may suggest that leaders became more dependent on organized meetings, activist networks, and publicity mechanisms rather than direct village visits. Overall, the findings clearly reveal that Dalit leadership has significantly contributed to increasing people's participation in social work and welfare programmes. The leadership has strengthened awareness generation, institutional coordination, and grassroots mobilization among Dalit communities. Although some traditional methods of participation-building declined, modern communication strategies and activist-based mobilization emerged as more influential approaches after leadership. Thus, the role of Dalit leaders has been crucial in enhancing political consciousness, social participation, and access to government welfare schemes among Dalit people (Ayyappan, 1967)

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Sr. No.	**Indicators**	**Before Leadership**	**After Leadership**	**Changes**
A. People Participation Rate in Social Work				
1	High Participation	8 (36.36%)	12 (54.55%)	+4 (+18.18%)
2	Average Participation	4 (18.18%)	7 (31.82%)	+3 (+13.64%)
3	Not Good Participation	10 (45.45%)	3 (13.64%)	-7 (-31.82%)
	Total	**22 (100%)**	**22 (100%)**	
B. Efforts Taken for Dalit People's Participation				
4	Village-level awareness meetings regarding government schemes and policies	14 (63.64%)	10 (45.45%)	-4 (-18.18%)

5	Community gatherings to create awareness about government schemes	15 (68.18%)	12 (54.55%)	-3 (-13.64%)
6	Advertisement of government schemes and policies	16 (72.73%)	19 (86.36%)	+3 (+13.64%)
7	Meetings with Sarpanch and Gramsevak	11 (50.00%)	14 (63.64%)	+3 (+13.64%)
8	Meetings with village-level Dalit social activists	10 (45.45%)	18 (81.82%)	+8 (+36.36%)
9	Frequent visits to villages with low participation in social work and government schemes	8 (36.36%)	4 (18.18%)	-4 (-18.18%)

Source: Compiled from secondary data collected from books, journals, government reports, websites, and published research studies. (Chief Election Commissioner of India, n.d., https://eci.gov.in/)

Before leadership, the proportion of respondents reporting not-good participation was around 45.45 percent, which significantly declined to 13.64 percent after leadership. This clearly indicates that Dalit political leaders in Maharashtra have largely succeeded in increasing the participation rate of people in social work and welfare-related activities during the study period. The study also examined the nature of efforts undertaken by Dalit leaders to improve Dalit people's participation in government schemes, policies, and social programmes. The findings reveal that certain traditional methods of mobilization, such as organizing village-level awareness meetings regarding government schemes and policies, conducting community gatherings to create awareness among Dalits, and frequently visiting villages where participation in social work and government schemes was low, have declined during the study

period. This suggests that after becoming leaders, respondents reduced their direct interaction and grassroots-level mobilization efforts. On the other hand, Dalit leaders increasingly adopted alternative methods such as advertisements of government schemes and policies, meetings with Sarpanch and Gramsevak, and coordination with village-level Dalit social activists. Among these efforts, meetings with village-level Dalit social activists showed the highest positive change. Before leadership, only 45.45 percent of respondents conducted such meetings, whereas after leadership the proportion increased to 81.82 percent, reflecting a positive change of 36.36 percent. This is one of the significant positive findings of the study, as it highlights the growing importance of activist networks and organized community leadership in strengthening Dalit participation. Overall, the findings suggest that after becoming leaders, respondents gave greater preference to publicity mechanisms, administrative coordination, and activist-based mobilization rather than direct interaction with people and community gatherings. This shift reflects changing strategies of Dalit leadership in promoting participation in social work and government welfare programmes.

7.2.3 Changes in People's Support of the Dalit Leaders

Public support is considered one of the most important indicators of effective and successful leadership. A leader who receives strong support from the people is generally able to mobilize communities, implement welfare activities, and represent public interests more effectively. Therefore, the present study attempted to examine the nature and extent of people's support received by Dalit leaders in Maharashtra during the study period. People's support for Dalit leaders reflects the level of trust, acceptance, and confidence developed among the community toward their leadership abilities and social contributions. Such support may be expressed in different forms, including participation in social activities, cooperation in implementing government schemes, electoral support, involvement in community programmes, and moral or organizational assistance during social movements and welfare initiatives. The study further attempts to analyze how the pattern of public support has changed before and after leadership. The increase in people's participation in social work, meetings with activists, and coordination with local administrative institutions suggests that Dalit leaders have gradually strengthened their social base and community acceptance. In particular, support from village-level Dalit social activists and local governance institutions appears to have contributed significantly to the effectiveness of Dalit leadership. Thus, people's support emerges as a major factor in strengthening Dalit political leadership in Maharashtra. The ability of leaders to gain public

confidence and mobilize collective participation indicates the growing political consciousness and organizational strength within Dalit communities during the study period.

Table No 7.2.3:- Partywise MLAs from Scheduled Caste Reserved Constituencies (1962–2024)

Year	Congress	BJP	Shiv Sena / SHS	NCP	Other Parties	Independents	Total
1962	30	-	-	-	RPI 02	-	32
1967	14	-	-	-	-	1	15
1972	12	-	-	-	RPI 01, FBL 01	1	15
1978	12	-	-	-	JNP 02, RPI 02, PWP 02, CPM 01, RPK 01	4	18
1980	15	-	-	-	PWP 01, RPK 01	1	18
1985	15	1	-	-	PWP 02	-	18
1990	8	3	1	-	PWP 02, JD 01, RPK 01	2	18
1995	3	8	4	-	-	3	18
1999	4	6	4	2	-	1	18
2004	4	5	4	2	JSS 01	-	18
2009	5	6	9	8	BBM 01	1	28
2014	3	12	8	3	BSP 02	-	28
2019	5	8	6	6	SWP 01	1	28
2024	3	10	7	5	JSS 01, RVSP 01, NCP-SP 04, SS(UBT) 05	-	28
Total	**123**	**59**	**43**	**26**	**31**	**14**	**304**

Source: - https://sec.maharashtra.gov.in/
https://eci.gov.in/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

7.2.4 Changes in Social Collaboration of the Dalit Leaders

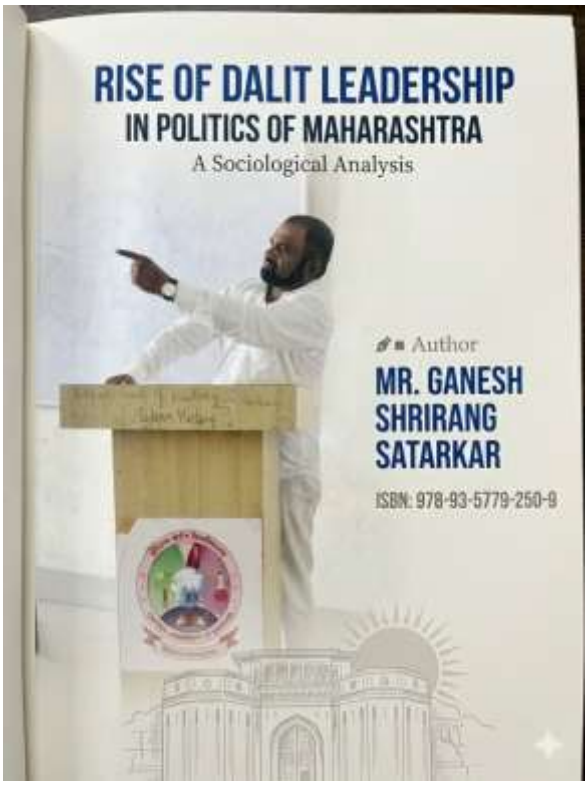
Social collaboration refers to the process through which individuals, groups, organizations, and institutions work together to achieve common social, political, and developmental goals.

At its basic level, social collaboration involves collective participation, coordination, and cooperation among people for the successful implementation of social welfare activities and community development programmes. In the context of Dalit leadership, social collaboration plays a crucial role in strengthening collective identity, mobilizing social support, and improving the socioeconomic conditions of marginalized communities. People-centric collaborative political leadership is essential for addressing the social and economic challenges faced by Dalit communities. Effective collaboration between political leaders, social activists, local administrative bodies, community organizations, and the public helps in creating awareness, improving access to government welfare schemes, and promoting social justice and equality. Through collaborative efforts, Dalit leaders can build stronger community networks and increase public participation in developmental activities. The success of democratic leadership also largely depends on the degree of social collaboration developed by political leaders. A leader who maintains strong collaboration with the people, social organizations, activists, and local institutions is more likely to gain public trust, strengthen electoral support, and sustain leadership for a longer period. In democratic politics, social collaboration enhances the legitimacy and effectiveness of leadership by ensuring collective decision-making and active public involvement. The present study attempts to examine the changes in the pattern of social collaboration among Dalit leaders in Maharashtra during the study period. It seeks to analyze how Dalit leaders have developed relationships with social groups, activists, local governance institutions, and community organizations after becoming leaders. The study also focuses on the extent to which collaborative leadership has contributed to strengthening Dalit political participation, social mobilization, and community development. Overall, social collaboration emerges as an important dimension of Dalit political leadership, as it not only supports democratic participation but also promotes collective empowerment and social transformation among marginalized communities. (Sirsikar, 1972)

7.2.5 Changes in Social Connectivity and Communication Modes of the Dalit Leaders

Social connectivity and communication are important dimensions of political leadership, especially in a democratic society where leaders are expected to maintain close relations with the people. Political leaders must continuously interact with citizens, social activists, community organizations, and local institutions in order to understand public problems and strengthen people's participation in social and political activities. In the case of Dalit leadership, social connectivity becomes more significant because it helps Leaders Bridge the

gap between marginalized communities and the political system. As politicians, Dalit leaders are expected to maintain strong social connections and effective communication with their supporters and activists. The success of leadership and electoral performance largely depends on the degree of social connectivity established by the leader within society. A leader who remains closely connected with the people, frequently communicates with the community, and actively participates in local issues has greater chances of gaining public trust and winning



"हरियाणा केंद्रीय विश्वविद्यालय में महाराष्ट्र छात्र संघ के गठन के अवसर पर अपने विचार व्यक्त करते हुए एवं विद्यार्थियों को मार्गदर्शन प्रदान करते हुए।"

Democratic elections compared to leaders who are socially less connected. The present study attempts to examine how Dalit leaders in Maharashtra maintain their social connectivity and communication networks. It focuses on the various modes of communication adopted by leaders to remain in contact with society and strengthen their relationship with activists and community members. These communication modes may include direct interaction with people, participation in community meetings, public gatherings, social networking, meetings with activists, coordination with local administrative institutions, and the use of media and publicity mechanisms. The changing nature of political communication has also influenced Dalit leadership patterns. Traditional forms of communication such as village meetings, door-to-door interaction, and community gatherings are gradually being supplemented or replaced by modern methods such as advertisements, media publicity, mobile communication, and social networking platforms. These changes indicate the transformation of Dalit political leadership from purely grassroots interaction toward a more organized and communication-oriented leadership style. The study further attempts to analyze whether these changing communication modes have strengthened the relationship between Dalit leaders and society. Effective social connectivity not only improves electoral support but also enhances public participation in social work, welfare programmes, and community mobilization. Therefore, social connectivity and communication emerge as important factors in strengthening Dalit political leadership and promoting social empowerment among Dalit communities.

7.2. 6 Changes in Social Relations of the Dalit Leaders

Good social relations are considered a prerequisite for effective and impressive political leadership. Strong social relations help leaders establish trust, cooperation, and acceptance among the people, which ultimately strengthens their political influence and public image. In democratic politics, a leader's popularity and reputation largely depend upon the quality of social relations maintained with community members, activists, local institutions, and different social groups within the constituency. Table 7.7 and Figure 7.7 present the scenario of social relations among Dalit political leaders in Maharashtra during the study period. The study attempts to analyze how the social relations of Dalit leaders changed after becoming political leaders and how these relations influenced their leadership effectiveness and public support. Social relations are important because they determine the extent to which leaders remain connected with society and are able to understand public needs and expectations. Leaders who maintain strong relations with people are generally more successful in mobilizing community participation, resolving local problems, and gaining electoral support.

Effective social relations also contribute to the development of social unity and collective action within marginalized communities. In the context of Dalit leadership, social relations play a significant role in reducing social distance between leaders and the community. Through regular interaction, cooperation with activists, participation in social programmes, and coordination with local governance institutions, Dalit leaders are able to strengthen their position within society. Positive social relations also help leaders gain moral support, improve their reputation, and enhance their credibility among the people. The study further examines whether there have been improvements in the nature of social relations after leadership. The increasing interaction with village-level activists, administrative officials, and community organizations indicates that Dalit leaders have gradually expanded their social networks and strengthened collaborative relations. Such developments contribute positively to leadership effectiveness and political sustainability. Overall, social relations emerge as an important determinant of Dalit political leadership in Maharashtra. Strong and healthy social relations not only improve the popularity and reputation of leaders within their constituencies but also contribute to greater public participation, social mobilization, and community empowerment.

7.2.7 Changes in Fulfillment of the Work Commitment

The fulfilment of promises and commitments made by political leaders is considered one of the most important indicators of effective and trustworthy leadership. During election campaigns, leaders often make various promises and commitments to voters regarding development work, welfare schemes, social justice, and community upliftment. However, in some cases, leaders make unrealistic or impossible promises that cannot be fulfilled, which may result in a loss of public trust and credibility. Therefore, the present study attempts to examine the extent to which Dalit political leaders in Maharashtra fulfilled their work commitments during the study period.

Sr. No.	Fulfilments of the Work Commitment	Before Leadership	After Leadership	Change
1	Yes, All Commitments Fulfilled	1 (4.55%)	12 (54.55%)	+11 (+50.00%)

2	Partially Fulfilled	7 (31.82%)	8 (36.36%)	+1 (+4.55%)
3	Not Fulfilled	14 (63.64%)	2 (9.09%)	-12 (-54.55%)
	Total	**22 (100%)**	**22 (100%)**	

Source: Compiled from secondary data collected from books, journals, government reports, websites, and published research studies.

7.2.8 Changes in Popularity and Reputation of Dalit Leaders

Popularity and reputation are important indicators of successful political leadership in a democratic society. A leader who enjoys public popularity and maintains a good reputation is more likely to receive social acceptance, political support, and electoral success. In the context of Dalit political leadership, popularity and reputation play a significant role in strengthening community mobilization, increasing people's participation, and enhancing the effectiveness of leadership within society. The present study attempts to examine the changes in the popularity and reputation of Dalit leaders in Maharashtra during the study period. The popularity of leaders generally depends upon several factors such as fulfillment of promises, social relations, public participation, accessibility to the people, leadership qualities, and involvement in social welfare activities. Similarly, reputation is shaped by the honesty, accountability, social commitment, and public image of the leaders within their constituencies.The findings of the study indicate that the popularity and reputation of Dalit leaders improved considerably after leadership. The increase in people's participation, stronger social collaboration, better fulfillment of work commitments, and improved communication with activists and local institutions contributed positively to enhancing the public image of Dalit leaders. Leaders who remained socially connected and actively participated in welfare and developmental activities gained greater trust and acceptance among the people. The study also suggests that Dalit leaders increasingly relied on organized communication methods, coordination with administrative institutions, and collaboration with village-level social activists to strengthen their political base and public reputation. Such efforts helped leaders expand their influence within society and improve their visibility among the community members. Moreover, effective fulfillment of commitments and active participation in public welfare programmes significantly contributed to improving the credibility and reliability of Dalit leaders. Public trust increased when leaders were able to address local issues, support community development, and maintain strong social relations with the people. Overall, the findings reveal that the popularity and reputation of Dalit

political leaders in Maharashtra witnessed positive changes during the study period. The strengthening of social relations, public participation, communication networks, and fulfillment of commitments collectively contributed to enhancing the political image and social acceptance of Dalit leaders within their constituencies.

7.2.9 Changes in Strategic Behavior

The second important dimension in the changing pattern of Dalit leadership is the transformation in the strategic behavior of the leaders. Strategic behavior refers to the various political, organizational, and developmental approaches adopted by leaders to strengthen their political position, mobilize public support, and achieve leadership objectives. In democratic politics, strategic behavior plays a crucial role in determining the success, effectiveness, and sustainability of political leadership. The changing strategic behavior of Dalit leaders reflects the broader transformation in political participation, electoral competition, and community mobilization in Maharashtra. With changing political conditions and increasing competition among political parties, Dalit leaders have gradually adopted new strategies to maintain their influence and strengthen their social and political base. The present study examines different dimensions of strategic behavior among Dalit political leaders, including political campaigning strategies, winning strategies, development strategies, and development priorities. These dimensions help to understand how Dalit leaders have adapted themselves to changing political realities and social expectations during the study period.

"मेरी प्रिय माँ के साथ कुछ अनमोल और यादगार क्षण।"

7.2.10 Political Campaigning Strategies

Political campaigning is one of the most important aspects of democratic politics, as it helps leaders communicate with voters, spread political messages, and mobilize public support during elections. Campaigning strategies often reflect the leadership style, political priorities, and organizational capacity of political leaders. The present study attempts to examine how the political campaigning strategies of Dalit political leaders in Maharashtra have changed over a period of time. Traditionally, Dalit leaders relied heavily on direct public interaction, community meetings, village visits, and grassroots mobilization during election campaigns. These methods were primarily based on personal contact with voters and social networks within the community. Such strategies helped leaders build emotional connections with people and increase political awareness among marginalized groups. However, the study indicates that political campaigning strategies have gradually changed with the transformation of political culture and communication systems. Dalit leaders increasingly adopted modern and organized campaigning methods such as advertisements, media publicity, public rallies, coordination with local activists, and communication through social and political networks. The use of administrative coordination, party-based campaigning, and activist mobilization also became more significant after leadership. The changing campaigning strategies suggest

that Dalit political leaders have shifted from purely traditional and community-centered campaigning methods toward more structured and strategic political approaches. This transformation reflects the increasing influence of political competition, media communication, and organizational politics in shaping leadership behavior. The study further highlights that effective political campaigning strategies contributed to strengthening public participation, improving the popularity of leaders, and increasing electoral support among Dalit communities. Leaders who successfully combined grassroots interaction with modern communication strategies were able to enhance their political visibility and strengthen their leadership position within society. Overall, the findings reveal that political campaigning strategies among Dalit leaders in Maharashtra underwent significant changes during the study period. These changes indicate the growing professionalization and strategic orientation of Dalit political leadership in contemporary democratic politics.

7.2.11 Changes in Winning Strategies

Winning strategies are one of the most significant components of political leadership and electoral success. Political leaders generally formulate their winning strategies at the grassroots level by understanding local social conditions, voter expectations, political competition, and organizational strengths. The effective execution of these strategies largely determines the success or failure of a candidate in democratic elections. Therefore, strategic planning and political management become essential elements of successful leadership. Winning strategies may be strong or weak depending upon the capacity of leaders to identify opportunities, manage challenges, and mobilize public support effectively. A strong winning strategy not only strengthens the leader's political position but also identifies the weaknesses of rival candidates and utilizes them strategically during election campaigns. At the same time, successful leaders attempt to improve their own organizational strength, maintain public relations, and address social and political challenges within their constituencies. The present study attempts to examine the changes in the winning strategies of Dalit political leaders in Maharashtra during the study period. Traditionally, Dalit leaders mainly depended on grassroots mobilization, caste solidarity, personal relations, community meetings, and direct interaction with voters to secure electoral success. These strategies were largely community-oriented and based on local social networks. However, with changing political conditions and increasing electoral competition, the winning strategies of Dalit leaders gradually became more organized and strategic in nature. Leaders increasingly relied on systematic campaigning, coordination with party organizations, support from village-level activists,

publicity mechanisms, media communication, and administrative networking to strengthen their electoral prospects. Modern communication methods, political alliances, and issue-based campaigning also emerged as important elements of contemporary winning strategies. The study further suggests that Dalit leaders increasingly focused on identifying voter expectations, addressing local developmental issues, and maintaining strong social connectivity to improve their electoral performance. The ability to manage public opinion, strengthen organizational networks, and maintain effective communication with the people became important components of successful electoral strategies. Moreover, winning strategies were not limited only to election campaigning but also included the fulfillment of public commitments, maintaining social relations, and ensuring participation in welfare activities. Leaders who successfully balanced political organization, public trust, and developmental initiatives were more likely to achieve electoral success and strengthen their leadership position. Overall, the findings reveal that the winning strategies of Dalit political leaders in Maharashtra underwent considerable changes during the study period. The shift from traditional grassroots campaigning toward more strategic, organized, and communication-oriented political approaches reflects the changing nature of democratic politics and leadership practices in contemporary society.

Table No 7.2.11 :-

Regionwise MLAs of Scheduled Caste from Reserved Constituencies (1962–2024)

Year	Mumbai	Konkan	Western Maharashtra	North Maharashtra	Marathwada	Vidarbha	Total
1962	1	1	10	3	7	10	32
1967	1	-	6	1	4	3	15
1972	1	-	6	1	4	3	15
1978	1	-	7	2	5	3	18
1980	1	-	7	2	5	3	18
1985	1	-	7	2	5	3	18
1990	1	-	7	2	5	3	18
1995	1	-	7	2	5	3	18
1999	1	-	7	2	5	3	18
2004	1	-	7	2	5	3	18
2009	4	-	7	1	5	11	28
2014	4	-	7	1	5	11	28
2019	4	-	7	1	5	11	28
2024	4	-	7	1	5	11	28
Total	**26**	**1**	**98**	**21**	**70**	**88**	**304**

Source :- https://sec.maharashtra.gov.in/?utm_source=chatgpt.com

7.2.12 Changes in Development Priorities

Development priorities play a crucial role in shaping the nature and direction of political leadership. Political leaders generally determine their developmental agenda on the basis of the intensity and seriousness of the problems faced by the people in their constituencies. In the case of Dalit political leadership, development priorities are closely associated with the socioeconomic conditions of marginalized communities and the need for social justice, welfare, and community empowerment. The present study attempts to examine the changes in the development priorities of Dalit political leaders in Maharashtra during the study period. The respondents were asked to rank various developmental issues according to their level of seriousness and importance. They were instructed to assign the first rank to the most severe and important problem, while the fourth rank was to be given to the least severe problem. This ranking method helped to identify the changing priorities and developmental concerns of Dalit leaders over time. The development priorities of Dalit leaders are generally influenced by factors such as poverty, unemployment, education, housing, social discrimination, lack of infrastructure, access to welfare schemes, and local developmental needs. Leaders often prioritize issues that directly affect the daily lives and socioeconomic conditions of Dalit communities. The study indicates that the development priorities of Dalit leaders have changed gradually with changing political, social, and economic conditions. Earlier, leaders mainly focused on basic welfare issues, social justice, and community representation. However, over time, greater emphasis has been placed on broader developmental concerns such as infrastructure development, employment generation, educational opportunities, implementation of government welfare schemes, and strengthening local governance systems. The changing development priorities also reflect the increasing political awareness and organizational maturity among Dalit leaders. Leaders are now more focused on long-term community development and institutional support rather than only symbolic representation or short-term political gains. Coordination with administrative institutions, local governance bodies, and social activists has also become an important aspect of addressing developmental priorities effectively. Furthermore, the prioritization of developmental issues demonstrates the leaders' understanding of the urgent needs of their constituencies. Leaders who are able to identify and address major social and economic problems are more likely to gain public trust, strengthen their political legitimacy, and improve their reputation within society. Overall, the findings reveal that the development priorities of Dalit political leaders in Maharashtra have

undergone significant changes during the study period. The shift toward more development-oriented and welfare-focused leadership indicates the growing importance of socioeconomic empowerment, public welfare, and inclusive development in contemporary Dalit political leadership.

7.2.3 Changes in Political and Administrative Behaviours of the Dalit Leaders

Political and administrative behaviour is one of the important dimensions in understanding the changing nature of Dalit leadership. The effectiveness of political leadership not only depends on public support and social relations but also on the ability of leaders to maintain strong political influence, administrative coordination, and organizational control within the political system. Political and administrative behaviour reflects how leaders interact with party organizations, administrative institutions, elected representatives, and government officials in order to strengthen their leadership position and implement developmental activities effectively. The present study attempts to examine the changes in the political and administrative behaviour of Dalit leaders in Maharashtra during the study period. These changes have been analyzed with the help of four important indices, namely relations of Dalit leaders with the party high command, ability to influence in the assembly, trust of the party high command, and control over administrative servants. The relationship between Dalit leaders and the party high command is an important indicator of political strength and organizational acceptance. Leaders who maintain good relations with the party leadership are generally able to receive greater political opportunities, organizational support, party resources, and decision-making authority. Strong relations with the party high command also help leaders gain recognition and strengthen their political position within the party structure.

Similarly, the ability to influence in the assembly is another important aspect of political behavior. Effective leaders are expected to raise public issues, influence policy discussions, participate actively in debates, and represent the interests of marginalized communities within legislative institutions. Greater influence in the assembly reflects the political confidence, communication skills, and leadership effectiveness of Dalit leaders. The trust of the party high command is also a significant factor in determining the stability and success of political leadership. Leaders who are trusted by party leadership are more likely to receive important responsibilities, electoral opportunities, and organizational support. Party trust also strengthens the political legitimacy and credibility of leaders within the party system. Another important component of administrative behaviour is the degree of control and coordination maintained by leaders over administrative servants and local government officials. Effective

coordination with administrative institutions helps leaders implement welfare schemes, solve public grievances, and ensure developmental work within their constituencies. Leaders who maintain good administrative relations are generally more capable of addressing local problems and fulfilling public expectations. The study indicates that the political and administrative behavior of Dalit leaders has undergone considerable changes over the study period. Increasing political experience, stronger organizational networking, better communication with party leadership, and improved administrative coordination contributed positively to strengthening Dalit leadership in Maharashtra. Overall, the findings suggest that political and administrative behaviour has become an important element in the transformation of Dalit leadership. Improved relations with party organizations enhanced legislative influence, increased party trust, and stronger administrative coordination collectively contributed to strengthening the effectiveness, stability, and political significance of Dalit leaders during the study period.

7.2.3.1 Changes in Relations with the Party High Command

The relationship between political leaders and the party high command is one of the most important aspects of political and administrative behavior in democratic politics. Strong relations with the party high command provide leaders with organizational support, political recognition, electoral opportunities, and greater influence within the party structure. In the context of Dalit political leadership, maintaining good relations with the party leadership becomes especially important for securing representation, strengthening political stability, and enhancing leadership effectiveness. The present study attempts to examine the changes in the relations of Dalit political leaders in Maharashtra with their respective party high command during the study period. The relationship with the party high command reflects the level of trust, communication, coordination, and political acceptance enjoyed by the leaders within their political parties. Traditionally, Dalit leaders often faced limitations in accessing higher decision-making structures within mainstream political parties due to social inequality, organizational hierarchy, and limited political representation. However, over time, changes in democratic politics, increasing political participation, and the growing importance of Dalit voters contributed to improving the political significance of Dalit leaders within party organizations. The study indicates that after becoming leaders, respondents gradually developed stronger communication and coordination with party leadership. Improved relations with the party high command helped Dalit leaders gain organizational support, political guidance, and better opportunities for electoral participation and leadership positions. Leaders

who maintained close relations with party leadership were also able to influence party decisions and secure greater attention toward issues affecting Dalit communities. Good relations with the party high command also contributed positively to the political stability and career growth of Dalit leaders. Such relationships enhanced their credibility within the party organization and increased the likelihood of receiving party nominations, administrative responsibilities, and support during elections. In many cases, party support also strengthened the ability of leaders to implement developmental programmes and welfare schemes within their constituencies. The study further suggests that the changing political environment encouraged Dalit leaders to adopt more strategic and organizational approaches in dealing with party leadership. Regular communication, active participation in party activities, coordination with senior leaders, and loyalty to party policies became important elements in strengthening relations with the party high command. Overall, the findings reveal that the relations between Dalit political leaders and the party high command improved significantly during the study period. These improved relations contributed positively to strengthening political influence, organizational acceptance, and leadership effectiveness among Dalit leaders in Maharashtra.

7.2.4 Economic Changes in the Dalit Leadership of Maharashtra

Economic factors play a very important role in democratic politics and leadership formation. It is commonly observed that electoral politics requires substantial financial resources for campaigning, public meetings, organizational activities, transportation, publicity, and communication. Therefore, politics is often considered difficult for economically weaker sections of society. Although in some exceptional cases poor leaders receive strong public support and collective assistance from the community, money power continues to play a significant role in electoral politics, particularly in assembly elections. In the context of Dalit political leadership, economic conditions become even more important because many Dalit leaders originate from socially and economically marginalized backgrounds. Economic limitations may affect their political participation, campaigning capacity, organizational influence, and ability to compete effectively in elections. At the same time, successful political leadership may also bring changes in the economic conditions of leaders through increased political opportunities, social influence, and access to resources. Therefore, the present study attempts to examine the economic changes that took place in the Dalit political leadership of Maharashtra during the study period. These economic changes have been analysed in the context of income, election expenditure, and credit or loan conditions of the leaders.

7.2.4.1 Changes in Income of the Dalit Leaders

Income is one of the important indicators of the economic status and living conditions of political leaders. The economic condition of leaders often influences their political participation, campaign strategies, and leadership effectiveness. The present study attempts to examine the changes in the income level of Dalit political leaders in Maharashtra during the study period. Traditionally, many Dalit leaders belonged to economically weaker sections and faced financial difficulties in sustaining political activities. However, after attaining leadership positions, many respondents experienced improvements in their income levels due to increased political influence, social recognition, and expanded professional or organizational opportunities. The study suggests that changes in income among Dalit leaders contributed positively to their political confidence, social status, and leadership sustainability. Improved income conditions also enhanced their capacity to participate in elections, conduct political campaigns, and support developmental activities within their constituencies. Overall, the findings indicate that economic improvement in terms of income became an important factor in strengthening Dalit political leadership and increasing participation in democratic politics.

7.2.4.2 Changes in Election Expenditure of the Dalit Leaders

Election expenditure is one of the most crucial components of political competition in democratic systems. Political leaders are required to spend money on campaigning activities such as public meetings, rallies, advertisements, transportation, publicity materials, party activities, and voter outreach programmes. Therefore, election expenditure significantly influences the competitiveness and success of political candidates. The present study attempts to analyze the changes in election expenditure among Dalit political leaders in Maharashtra during the study period. The findings indicate that election expenditure increased considerably after leadership due to growing political competition, expansion of campaign activities, and the increasing influence of media and publicity in elections. Dalit leaders increasingly adopted organized and strategic campaigning methods, which required greater financial investment. Expenditure on advertisements, communication networks, political mobilization, and coordination with activists became more important in contemporary electoral politics. This shift reflects the growing commercialization and professionalization of election campaigns. At the same time, higher election expenditure created economic pressure on many leaders, especially those belonging to economically weaker backgrounds. Despite these challenges,

leaders who successfully managed campaign resources and public support were able to strengthen their political position and electoral performance. Overall, the study reveals that changes in election expenditure significantly influenced the political strategies and leadership patterns of Dalit leaders in Maharashtra.

7.2.4.3 Changes in Credit / Loan of the Dalit Leaders

Credit and loan conditions are important indicators of the financial burden and economic management of political leaders. Elections and political activities often require substantial financial resources, which may compel leaders to depend on loans, borrowing, or financial assistance from supporters and political networks. The present study attempts to examine the changes in the credit and loan situation of Dalit political leaders in Maharashtra during the study period. The findings suggest that political participation and election campaigning increased the financial responsibilities of many leaders, leading to changes in their borrowing patterns and loan conditions. Some leaders depended on personal savings, while others relied on community support, political parties, or financial borrowing to manage election expenditure and political activities. In certain cases, increased political influence and improved economic status helped leaders reduce financial dependency and strengthen their financial stability. The study also indicates that financial challenges remained an important issue for many Dalit leaders, particularly those with limited economic resources. However, community support, organizational assistance, and growing political influence played a significant role in helping leaders manage economic difficulties associated with political participation. Overall, the findings reveal that economic changes in terms of income, election expenditure, and credit conditions significantly influenced the nature and functioning of Dalit political leadership in Maharashtra.

7.2.5 Changes in the Personality and Psychology of the Dalit Leaders

Personality and psychological characteristics are important dimensions of political leadership because they influence decision-making ability, communication skills, leadership style, public behaviour, and political effectiveness. Leadership not only transforms the social and political position of individuals but also brings significant changes in their thinking patterns, confidence, attitudes, vision, and working behaviour. The present study attempts to examine the changes in the personality and psychology of Dalit political leaders in Maharashtra during the study period. Political experience, public interaction, organizational responsibilities, and participation in democratic processes contributed significantly to shaping the psychological and behavioral characteristics of the leaders. The study focuses on different aspects of

personality and psychological transformation, including wisdom, vision, working methods, and skills and capabilities of Dalit leaders.

"छत्रपति संभाजी महाराज की माता एवं छत्रपति शिवाजी महाराज की प्रथम पत्नी महारानी सईबाई भोसले के त्याग, संस्कार और प्रेरणादायी व्यक्तित्व को श्रद्धापूर्वक नमन करते हुए।"

7.2.5.1 Changes in the Wisdom of the Dalit Leaders

Wisdom is an important quality of effective leadership, as it helps leaders make balanced decisions, solve public problems, and understand social realities. Political experience and social interaction gradually increase the practical knowledge and maturity of leaders.

The study suggests that after becoming leaders, respondents developed greater political understanding, social awareness, and decision-making ability. Increased exposure to public

issues, administrative systems, and political processes contributed positively to the wisdom and maturity of Dalit leaders.

7.2.5.2 Changes in the Vision of the Dalit Leaders

Vision refers to the ability of leaders to think about long-term social, political, and developmental goals. Effective leadership requires a broader vision for community welfare, social justice, and political empowerment. The findings indicate that Dalit leaders gradually developed a more development-oriented and future-focused vision after leadership. Their priorities expanded from immediate community issues toward broader concerns such as education, employment, infrastructure, political participation, and social empowerment.

7.2.5.3 Changes in the Working Methods of Dalit Leaders

The working methods of political leaders often change with increasing political experience and organizational responsibilities. Earlier, Dalit leaders mainly depended on direct public interaction and traditional mobilization techniques. However, over time, leaders increasingly adopted organized, strategic, and communication-oriented working methods. Coordination with administrative institutions, activist networks, political organizations, and publicity mechanisms became important aspects of their functioning.

7.2.5.4 Changes in Skills and Capabilities

Leadership development also brings improvements in communication skills, organizational ability, negotiation capacity, political management, and administrative coordination. The study indicates that Dalit leaders developed stronger leadership skills and capabilities after entering active politics. Increased public exposure, election campaigning, and organizational participation enhanced their confidence, communication ability, and problem-solving skills. Overall, the findings reveal that leadership significantly contributed to the personality development and psychological transformation of Dalit political leaders in Maharashtra.

7.2.6 Ambedkar Thoughts and Changes in Political Views of the Dalit Leaders

The political ideology and social philosophy of Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar have played a foundational role in shaping Dalit political consciousness and leadership in India. Ambedkar's thoughts on social justice, equality, democracy, education, constitutional rights, and empowerment of marginalized communities continue to influence Dalit political movements

and leadership practices. The present study attempts to examine the extent to which Ambedkarite ideology influenced the political views and leadership orientation of Dalit leaders in Maharashtra during the study period. The study also explores how changing political conditions, party affiliations, and electoral strategies affected the ideological perspectives of Dalit leaders. The findings suggest that Ambedkar's ideology remained an important source of inspiration for many Dalit leaders. Principles such as social equality, constitutional democracy, educational advancement, and protection of Dalit rights continued to shape their political thinking and social activities. At the same time, changing political realities encouraged leaders to adopt more practical and strategic political approaches. Electoral competition, party politics, coalition building, and developmental concerns influenced the political behavior and ideological orientation of leaders. Consequently, while Ambedkarite thought remained central to Dalit identity and political consciousness, leaders also adapted their political views according to contemporary political and social conditions. Overall, the study reveals that Ambedkarite ideology continued to serve as a guiding force in Dalit political leadership, while changing democratic and political circumstances contributed to the evolution of political views and leadership strategies among Dalit leaders in Maharashtra (Lynch, 1974)

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7.3 Perception of Dalit Leaders in Maharashtra

The perceptions, views, sensitivity, and awareness of political leaders toward social and economic issues play a significant role in shaping their leadership behavior, policy priorities, and social commitment. In the case of Dalit political leadership, perceptions regarding caste discrimination, social justice, reservation policy, and socioeconomic inequality are particularly important because these issues directly affect the lives of marginalized communities. The present section attempts to examine the perceptions of Dalit political leaders in Maharashtra regarding various socio-economic issues affecting Dalit communities. The study seeks to understand how Dalit leaders perceive the caste system, social discrimination, government policies, reservation, and the socioeconomic conditions of Dalit people. These perceptions help to analyze the ideological orientation, social sensitivity, and political consciousness of Dalit leaders in the study region. This section is divided into six important sub-sections. The first sub-section focuses on the perceptions of Dalit political leaders regarding the caste system in Maharashtra. The second and third sub-sections examine the views of Dalit leaders on the major problems faced by Dalits and their perceptions regarding social discrimination against Dalit communities. The fourth, fifth, and sixth sub-sections discuss the opinions of

Dalit leaders on reservation policy, government schemes and welfare programmes for Dalits, and the socioeconomic conditions of Dalit people respectively. Overall, this section attempts to understand the extent to which Dalit political leaders are aware of and sensitive toward the structural inequalities and social realities experienced by Dalit communities in contemporary Maharashtra.

7.3.1 Views on the Effect of the Caste System in Maharashtra

The caste system has historically been one of the most significant social institutions influencing the social, economic, political, and cultural life of Indian society. In Maharashtra, as in many other parts of India, the caste system has deeply affected social relations, access to resources, educational opportunities, political participation, and occupational mobility. Dalit communities, in particular, have historically faced exclusion, untouchability, discrimination, and social inequality under the caste-based social structure. The present study attempts to examine the perceptions of Dalit political leaders regarding the effects of the caste system in Maharashtra. Since Dalit leaders themselves emerge from communities that have experienced caste-based discrimination, their views provide important insights into the continuing impact of caste on society and politics. The study suggests that the majority of Dalit leaders perceive the caste system as a major obstacle to social equality, social justice, and inclusive development. According to many respondents, caste continues to influence social interactions, political representation, access to opportunities, and the distribution of social and economic resources in Maharashtra. Despite constitutional safeguards and democratic reforms, caste-based discrimination and social inequality continue to exist in different forms. Dalit leaders also emphasized that the caste system negatively affects social unity and democratic values by creating divisions and hierarchies within society. The persistence of caste identity in politics, education, employment, marriage, and social relations indicates that caste remains an influential factor in contemporary social life. At the same time, the study indicates that political awareness, education, urbanization, social movements, and constitutional protections have contributed to some positive changes in reducing caste-based discrimination. The influence of social reform movements and the ideology of Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar also played an important role in increasing social consciousness and political empowerment among Dalit communities in Maharashtra. However, many Dalit leaders believe that the caste system still creates barriers to equal opportunities and social mobility. They argue that social discrimination, economic inequality, and political exclusion continue to affect Dalit communities despite legal and constitutional protections. Overall, the findings reveal that

Dalit political leaders in Maharashtra view the caste system as a continuing source of social inequality and discrimination, while also recognizing the positive role of education, social movements, constitutional rights, and political participation in challenging caste-based oppression and promoting social transformation. (Constitution of India, 1950)

Sr. No.	Perception of the Dalit Leaders on the Caste System	No. of Respondents	Percentage	Positive / Negative Percentage
1	The caste system in Maharashtra is adversely affecting the socio-economic development of the State and is a major hurdle in the path of development. (Positive perception)	10	45.45%	86.36%
2	The desired social changes and social transition have not been brought to Maharashtra due to the caste system. (Positive perception)	9	40.91%	
3	The caste system in Maharashtra is not influencing the socio-economic development of the State and is not a major issue in the process of development. (Negative perception)	1	4.55%	13.64%
4	The caste system is an integral part of society in Maharashtra and it cannot vanish. (Negative perception)	2	9.09%	
	Total	**22**	**100%**	**100%**

Source: Compiled from secondary data collected from books, journals, government reports, websites, and published research studies.

Interpretation

Table 7.26 highlights the perceptions of Dalit political leaders regarding the effect of the caste system in Maharashtra. The findings clearly indicate that the majority of Dalit leaders hold a critical view of the caste system and consider it a major obstacle to social and economic development. Out of the total respondents, 45.45 percent stated that the caste system adversely affects the socio-economic development of Maharashtra and acts as a major hurdle in the path of development. Similarly, 40.91 percent of respondents believed that the desired social changes and social transformation have not taken place in Maharashtra because of the

continuing influence of the caste system. Together, these responses constitute 86.36 percent positive perception, indicating that most Dalit leaders recognize the caste system as a serious social problem affecting equality and development. On the other hand, only 4.55 percent of respondents stated that the caste system does not significantly influence the socio-economic development of the state. Another 9.09 percent believed that the caste system is an integral part of society and cannot completely disappear. Together, these responses account for 13.64 percent negative perception. Overall, the findings reveal that a large majority of Dalit political leaders in Maharashtra perceive the caste system as a major barrier to social justice, equality, and socioeconomic progress. The responses also indicate that Dalit leaders are highly aware of the continuing impact of caste-based discrimination and social inequality in contemporary Maharashtra.

"कोल्हापुर के छत्रपति संभाजीराजे छत्रपति के साथ एक स्मरणीय क्षण।"

7.3.2 Dalit Leaders' Views on the Problems Faced by Dalits

Dalit communities in Maharashtra continue to face several socio-economic problems such as poor housing conditions, lack of clean drinking water, unhygienic living environments,

poverty, unemployment, lack of agricultural land, limited livelihood opportunities, low educational attainment, malnutrition, social discrimination, economic exploitation by upper castes, inadequate implementation of government schemes and policies, and the absence of social equality. These issues continue to affect the overall development and social mobility of Dalit communities in the state. Therefore, the present study attempts to examine the perceptions of Dalit political leaders regarding the major problems faced by Dalits in Maharashtra with the help of Table 7.27. The findings reveal that the majority of Dalit leaders are highly aware and sensitive toward the socioeconomic and social problems experienced by Dalit communities. About 9.09 percent of the respondents stated that the economic and social inclusion of the Dalit community is still a major issue in Maharashtra. This response reflects the continuing exclusion of Dalits from mainstream development processes and is therefore considered a positive perception. Similarly, 40.91 percent of Dalit leaders stated that a large section of the Dalit community is still deprived of the mainstream of economic and social development in Maharashtra and that more government efforts are required for their upliftment. Since this response highlights the actual condition of Dalit communities, it is also categorized as a positive perception. Further, 31.82 percent of respondents observed that issues such as education, health, employment, social dignity, living conditions, working conditions, economic and social exploitation, social discrimination, lack of agricultural land, and unhygienic working and living environments continue to remain serious concerns for Dalit communities in Maharashtra. This perception also reflects social reality and is therefore considered a positive perception. Likewise, 9.09 percent of respondents stated that some issues related to Dalits were politically created or exaggerated by non-Dalit political parties for political propaganda and electoral gain. This view is also considered a positive perception because it reflects political awareness regarding the exploitation of Dalit issues in competitive politics. Overall, a total of 90.91 percent of Dalit leaders expressed positive perceptions regarding the problems faced by Dalits. This clearly indicates that the majority of Dalit political leaders in Maharashtra are aware of the social, economic, and political challenges faced by Dalit communities. The findings also suggest that Dalit leaders possess considerable social sensitivity and understanding regarding the conditions of marginalized groups in contemporary Maharashtra.

Table 7.3.2 Perceptions of the Dalit Leaders on the Problems of Dalits

Sr. No.	Perception of the Dalit Leaders on Problems of Dalits	No. of Respondents	Percentage	Positive / Negative Percentage
1	The economic and social inclusion of the Dalit community is still a major issue in Maharashtra. (Positive perception)	2	9.09%	90.91%
2	A large segment of the Dalit community is still deprived of the mainstream of economic and social development in Maharashtra. Therefore, more government efforts are needed to uplift them. (Positive perception)	9	40.91%	
3	Education, health, employment, social dignity, living conditions, working conditions, economic and social exploitation, social discrimination, lack of agricultural land, and unhygienic working and living environments of the Dalit community are still matters of great concern in Maharashtra. (Positive perception)	7	31.82%	
5	There are not many severe socio-economic issues for Dalits in Maharashtra. (Negative perception)	1	4.55%	9.09%
6	Historically the Dalit community in Maharashtra was exploited by the upper class of society, but in the present era socio-economic exploitation of Dalits has drastically reduced. (Negative perception)	1	4.55%	
	Total	**22**	**100%**	**100%**

Source: Compiled from secondary data collected from books, journals, government reports, websites, and published research studies.

Interpretation

Table 7.27 presents the perceptions of Dalit political leaders regarding the major problems faced by Dalit communities in Maharashtra. The findings indicate that the majority of Dalit leaders possess a high level of awareness and sensitivity toward the socio-economic challenges faced by Dalits. Among the respondents, 40.91 percent stated that a large segment of the Dalit community is still deprived of the mainstream of economic and social development and therefore requires greater government support for upliftment. Similarly, 31.82 percent of respondents emphasized that issues related to education, health, employment, social dignity, living conditions, social discrimination, economic exploitation, lack of

agricultural land, and unhygienic working and living conditions continue to remain major concerns for Dalit communities in Maharashtra. Further, 9.09 percent of respondents observed that economic and social inclusion of Dalits remains a major issue in the state, while another 9.09 percent stated that some Dalit-related issues are politically utilized by non-Dalit political parties for propaganda and political gain. Since all these responses reflect social realities and structural challenges faced by Dalit communities, they are categorized as positive perceptions. Altogether, 90.91 percent of respondents expressed positive perceptions regarding Dalit issues. On the other hand, only 4.55 percent of respondents believed that there are no major socio-economic issues for Dalits in Maharashtra, while another 4.55 percent stated that socio-economic exploitation of Dalits has drastically reduced in the present era. These responses are categorized as negative perceptions and together constitute only 9.09 percent of the total responses. Overall, the findings clearly reveal that the majority of Dalit political leaders in Maharashtra are highly aware of the social, economic, and developmental problems faced by Dalit communities. The study also highlights the continuing relevance of issues such as inequality, social discrimination, poverty, and exclusion in shaping Dalit political consciousness and leadership perspectives.

"लोकराजा राजर्षि छत्रपति शाहू महाराज की समाधि का दर्शन कर उनके जनकल्याणकारी कार्यों को स्मरण करते हुए।"

7.4 Dalit Leaders' Views on Reservation Policy for Dalits

Reservation policy is considered one of the most significant constitutional safeguards for the social, educational, economic, and political empowerment of Dalit communities in India. The reservation system was introduced to reduce historical inequalities, ensure representation of marginalized communities, and promote social justice within democratic institutions. In Maharashtra, reservation continues to remain an important political and social issue influencing Dalit leadership and community development. The present study attempts to examine the views of Dalit political leaders regarding the reservation policy for Dalits. The findings reveal that the majority of Dalit leaders strongly support the continuation and effective implementation of reservation policies. According to many respondents, reservation is not a matter of charity but a constitutional right achieved through the struggles and efforts of Dr. Bhimrao Ramji Ambedkar. Dalit leaders believe that reservation plays a crucial role in ensuring political representation, employment opportunities, educational advancement, and social dignity for marginalized communities. One respondent provided a detailed perception regarding reservation policy and emphasized that reservation should continue until complete social equality is achieved. According to the respondent, the government has failed to properly implement reservation policies and has not fully implemented the recommendations of the Mandal Commission. The respondent further argued that caste-based census data are not properly released because the government fears increasing demands for greater reservation benefits from Dalit communities. The respondent also observed that non-Dalit political parties attempt to weaken reservation through privatization and by promoting demands for economic-based reservation. According to this perception, reservation remains the only effective means through which Dalits can gain political representation, employment opportunities, and social respect. It was emphasized that Dalit candidates are generally given opportunities only in reserved constituencies, while non-Dalit political parties rarely provide tickets to Dalits in general seats, reflecting continuing political discrimination. The respondent further argued that without reservation Dalits would lose political power and representation in governance structures. Reservation was described as an essential mechanism for sharing political power and protecting constitutional rights. The respondent also highlighted concerns regarding the improper implementation of reservation, misuse of fake caste certificates, and inadequate awareness among Dalit communities regarding the importance of reservation policies.Another important issue raised was reservation in promotions. The respondent

emphasized that reservation in promotions should continue because it encourages recruitment and supports career advancement among marginalized communities. Reference was also made to Article 16(4A) of the Constitution and the 85th Constitutional Amendment relating to reservation in promotions. According to the respondent, many governments neglected the implementation of constitutional provisions related to reservation, thereby weakening the social justice framework. The respondent also criticized Dalit leaders associated with non-Dalit political parties for failing to work effectively for Dalit welfare and development. It was argued that many leaders remain more loyal to party leadership than to the interests of Dalit communities. The respondent further suggested that separate electorates, rather than political reservation alone, could create stronger and more independent Dalit leadership in India. Overall, the findings reveal that Dalit political leaders in Maharashtra strongly support reservation policy as an essential tool for social justice, equality, political representation, and community empowerment. The perceptions of the respondents also indicate continuing concerns regarding inadequate implementation, political discrimination, and attempts to weaken reservation policies in contemporary India.

Naravane, A. V. (2026). Evaluation of judicial perspectives of reservation in educational institutions and study of reservation in post graduate education in university departments with special reference to State of Maharashtra (Doctoral dissertation). Maharashtra. The study highlights the important relationship between reservation policies and the growth of Dalit leadership in Maharashtra politics and society. Judicial perspectives on reservation in educational institutions have significantly influenced the educational advancement of Scheduled Castes and other marginalized communities. By protecting constitutional principles of equality and social justice, the judiciary enabled greater access to postgraduate education in university departments. This educational access contributed to the emergence of educated Dalit leaders, activists, administrators, and political representatives. Dalit leadership in Maharashtra was strongly shaped by the ideas of B. R. Ambedkar, who viewed education as a tool for social transformation and empowerment. Reservation policies helped increase representation of Dalit students in higher education, which later strengthened their participation in politics, bureaucracy, and public institutions. The study also explains that judicial decisions regarding reservation affected policy implementation, institutional representation, and opportunities for marginalized communities. The growth of educated Dalit leadership enhanced awareness about constitutional rights, social justice, and political participation. Thus, reservation in higher education became an important factor in

strengthening Dalit leadership and democratic inclusion in Maharashtra. (Constitution of India, 1950)

7.5 Dalit Leaders' Views on the Policies and Schemes of Government for Dalits

Governments at both the central and state levels formulate various welfare policies and development schemes for the upliftment of marginalized communities, including Dalits. Programmes such as the Jan Dhan Yojana, Indira Awas Yojana, MNREGA, educational scholarships, housing schemes, employment programmes, and social security measures are intended to improve the socioeconomic conditions of disadvantaged groups. In democratic politics, welfare schemes and public policies also become important political instruments through which parties attempt to gain public support and strengthen their vote banks. The present study attempts to examine the views of Dalit political leaders regarding government policies and welfare schemes for Dalits in Maharashtra. The findings indicate that the majority of Dalit leaders consider welfare schemes and development policies essential for improving the living conditions, educational opportunities, employment status, and social empowerment of Dalit communities. Dalit leaders observed that although governments have introduced several schemes for the welfare of marginalized communities, the implementation of these programmes often remains inadequate and uneven. Many respondents emphasized that a large section of Dalit communities still does not receive the full benefits of welfare schemes due to administrative inefficiency, corruption, lack of awareness, political interference, and improper implementation mechanisms. The study also suggests that political parties often use welfare schemes as tools for electoral mobilization and vote-bank politics. During elections, promises regarding welfare programmes, housing, employment, subsidies, and social benefits are frequently used to attract support from marginalized communities. However, many leaders believe that the actual implementation of these promises remains limited after elections. At the same time, respondents acknowledged that government policies and schemes have contributed positively to improving education, housing facilities, banking access, employment opportunities, and social security among Dalit communities. Schemes related to financial inclusion, rural employment, scholarships, and housing development have helped many Dalit families improve their socioeconomic conditions. Overall, the findings indicate that Dalit political leaders view government policies and welfare schemes as important instruments for social justice and community development, while also recognizing the need for more effective implementation, transparency, and accountability in delivering benefits to Dalit communities.

7.6 Views of Dalit Leaders on the Socio-economic Condition of Dalits

The socioeconomic condition of Dalit communities is an important indicator of social justice, equality, and inclusive development in society. Historically, Dalits have experienced social exclusion, economic exploitation, untouchability, lack of educational opportunities, poor living conditions, and political marginalization. Therefore, the present study attempts to examine the views of Dalit political leaders regarding the changing socioeconomic conditions of Dalit communities in Maharashtra. One respondent provided a detailed perception regarding the socioeconomic condition of Dalits. According to the respondent, significant social changes have taken place in recent decades, particularly in reducing untouchability and social exclusion. Earlier, Dalits were not even allowed to access drinking water from common sources, but now such restrictions have reduced considerably. The respondent stated that Dalits can now access bore wells and public water facilities without major opposition from upper castes. Similarly, the use of abusive behavior and open discrimination against Dalits has reduced compared to earlier periods. The respondent further observed that Dalits are no longer completely dependent on upper castes for financial support or loans during difficult situations such as droughts. Migration for employment has increased, and Dalit communities have developed greater economic independence compared to earlier generations. However, the respondent also acknowledged that social and economic problems still continue in some villages and rural areas. The findings of the study indicate that Dalit leaders recognize both positive changes and continuing challenges in the socioeconomic condition of Dalit communities. Improvements in education, awareness, political participation, social mobility, and access to welfare schemes have contributed positively to Dalit empowerment. At the same time, problems such as poverty, unemployment, lack of land ownership, poor living conditions, social discrimination, and economic inequality continue to affect many Dalit families. Dalit leaders also emphasized that social transformation has not occurred uniformly across all regions and communities. Urbanization, education, constitutional safeguards, and social movements have helped reduce some forms of discrimination, but structural inequalities still persist in many rural areas. Overall, the findings reveal that Dalit political leaders perceive gradual improvement in the socioeconomic condition of Dalits in Maharashtra while also recognizing the continuing existence of social and economic inequalities. The responses suggest that despite positive social changes, sustained government efforts, social awareness, and political empowerment remain necessary for achieving complete social justice and equality for Dalit communities. (Constitution of India, 1950)

7.7 Contemporary Dalit Leadership and Its Role

The role of contemporary Dalit leadership has become an important subject of academic and political discussion in recent decades. After analyzing the contribution of Dalit movements and leadership during the pre-independence and post-independence periods, it becomes necessary to examine the functioning and effectiveness of present-day Dalit political leadership in Maharashtra. Contemporary Dalit leadership operates within a complex political environment influenced by party politics, electoral competition, coalition politics, social justice movements, and changing socioeconomic conditions. Several studies have pointed out that contemporary Dalit leadership is often constrained by party ideology, organizational discipline, political dependency, and electoral calculations. In many cases, Dalit leaders are expected to function according to the ideology and political priorities of their respective political parties rather than independently representing the interests of Dalit communities. This situation sometimes limits their ability to raise independent voices on issues concerning social justice, equality, and Dalit welfare. Therefore, the present study attempts to analyze the views of selected respondents regarding the role of contemporary Dalit leadership in Maharashtra and its contribution toward the upliftment of Dalit communities. The study focuses on understanding how far contemporary Dalit leaders have succeeded in improving the social, economic, political, and educational conditions of Dalits and what challenges they continue to face in the process of community development and empowerment.

"सातारा जिले के फलटण तहसीलदार को मराठा समाज के आरक्षण की मांग के समर्थन में निवेदन प्रस्तुत करते हुए।"

7.7.1 Functioning of the Dalit Leaders to Uplift the Dalits

The functioning of Dalit leaders plays a crucial role in promoting social justice, political participation, and socioeconomic development among Dalit communities. Effective leadership is expected to address issues such as poverty, unemployment, education, social discrimination, landlessness, lack of representation, and inadequate implementation of welfare schemes. Dalit leaders are also expected to mobilize communities, spread awareness regarding constitutional rights, and ensure greater participation of Dalits in political and developmental processes. The present study attempts to examine how contemporary Dalit political leaders in Maharashtra are functioning for the upliftment of Dalit communities. The findings suggest that Dalit leaders have contributed positively in certain areas such as increasing political awareness, promoting participation in government schemes, improving access to welfare programmes, and strengthening representation within democratic institutions. Many respondents observed that Dalit leaders have helped create awareness regarding reservation policies, constitutional rights, educational opportunities, and government welfare schemes. Through meetings, social activism, community mobilization, and political participation, Dalit leaders have attempted to strengthen the political consciousness of Dalit communities. The growth of educational awareness, social activism, and participation in democratic politics reflects the positive contribution of Dalit leadership. At the same time, the study also reveals several limitations in the functioning of contemporary Dalit leadership. Many respondents believe that Dalit leaders often remain dependent on non-Dalit political parties and are therefore unable to independently raise issues concerning Dalit welfare. Party ideology and political discipline sometimes restrict leaders from taking strong positions on social discrimination, reservation policies, and socioeconomic inequality. The findings further suggest that some Dalit leaders focus more on maintaining political positions and party loyalty rather than addressing grassroots social issues. As a result, many developmental problems such as poverty, unemployment, lack of land ownership, inadequate educational facilities, poor living conditions, and social discrimination continue to affect Dalit communities in many areas. Another important observation is that Dalit leadership today is increasingly influenced by electoral politics and strategic political alliances. Modern political campaigning, organizational networking, and administrative coordination have become important aspects of leadership functioning. While these strategies help leaders remain politically relevant, they sometimes reduce direct interaction with the community and grassroots social mobilization. Despite these limitations, the study indicates that contemporary Dalit leadership continues to

play an important role in protecting constitutional rights, strengthening political participation, and promoting social awareness among Dalit communities. Dalit leaders also contribute to raising issues related to reservation, social justice, welfare policies, and discrimination within political and administrative institutions. Overall, the findings reveal that contemporary Dalit leadership in Maharashtra has achieved partial success in improving the condition of Dalit communities. Although significant progress has been made in political awareness, representation, and social mobility, several social and economic challenges still persist. Therefore, stronger community-oriented leadership, independent political assertion, effective implementation of welfare schemes, and greater commitment toward social justice remain essential for the future upliftment and empowerment of Dalit communities. (Constitution of India, 1950)

"मराठा समाज को आरक्षण प्रदान करने की मांग हेतु सातारा जिले के फलटण तहसीलदार महोदय को निवेदन देते हुए।"

CHAPTER VIII
MAJOR FINDINGS AND CONCLUSION

"मेरे विधि (Law) अध्ययन काल के दौरान सावित्रीबाई फुले पुणे विश्वविद्यालय की ऐतिहासिक एवं भव्य मुख्य इमारत के समक्ष ज्ञान, शिक्षा और शैक्षणिक उत्कृष्टता की प्रेरणा प्राप्त करते हुए।"

8.1 Introduction

The study focuses on the changing nature of Dalit political leadership in Maharashtra. The emergence of Dalit leadership was closely connected with the Dalit movement and the struggle against untouchability. The research examined both pre-independence and post-independence developments in Dalit politics and leadership. The study also analyzed the social, economic, administrative, strategic, and psychological dimensions of Dalit leaders and their role in the upliftment of the Dalit community.

8.2 Factors Responsible for its Emergence

1. **Emergence of Dalit Political Leadership** Dalit political leadership in Maharashtra emerged through the anti-untouchability movement led by Dr. B. R. Ambedkar. He transformed Dalits into an organized political community and emphasized political participation as a means of social empowerment.

2. **Ambedkar's Political Vision** Dr. Ambedkar proposed the "Charter of 15 Demands" to secure political rights, voting rights, and representation for untouchables. His vision aimed at achieving equality, justice, and political empowerment for Dalits.

3. **Independent Labour Party (ILP)** The Independent Labour Party (ILP), founded in 1936, sought to unite workers, peasants, and Dalits. It promoted social justice, labor rights, and economic equality along with caste emancipation.

4. **Anti-Untouchability and Economic Justice** Ambedkar viewed untouchability as both a social and economic system of exploitation. He argued that caste-based division of labor oppressed Dalits permanently and organized movements against exploitative systems like the Khoti system.

5. **Scheduled Caste Federation (SCF)** After the decline of the ILP, the Scheduled Caste Federation (SCF) was established to represent Dalit interests politically. Although it performed poorly in the 1946 elections, it attempted alliances with socialist and democratic groups.

6. **Republican Party of India (RPI)** The Republican Party of India (RPI), envisioned by Ambedkar in 1956, became a major political organization for Dalits in post-independence India. It focused on land reforms, representation, and social justice.

7. **Fragmentation of the RPI** During the 1970s, the RPI faced factionalism and leadership conflicts. These divisions weakened the party's unity and reduced its influence in addressing Dalit concerns.
8. **Rise of Dalit Panthers** The Dalit Panther movement emerged through educated Dalit youth dissatisfied with traditional leadership. It actively fought against caste atrocities and inspired Dalit youth across Maharashtra with its militant approach.

9. **Ideology of Dalit Panthers** The Dalit Panthers combined Ambedkarite and Marxist ideologies. Under leaders like Namdeo Dhasal, the movement emphasized the eradication of both caste oppression and class exploitation.

10. **Internal Conflicts in Dalit Panthers** The Dalit Panthers later split into factions because of ideological differences and leadership disputes. Conflicts regarding relations with communist and Naxalite groups further weakened the organization.

8.2.2 The Socio-Economic Background of Dalit Political Leaders in Maharashtra

The study of Dalit political leadership in Maharashtra highlights important socio-political trends among Scheduled Caste MLAs and leaders. Dalit representation is concentrated in reserved constituencies, with many leaders emerging from urban and semi-urban regions, reflecting the urban orientation of contemporary Dalit politics. Most leaders belong to the middle-age group, while youth participation remains limited. The absence of women leaders indicates the continued dominance of patriarchal values in political representation. The study also reveals variations in sub-caste representation, with Matang leaders enjoying greater political visibility compared to Mahar and Chambhar communities. Education has played a significant role in the empowerment of Dalit leaders, as most respondents possess higher educational qualifications. Occupationally, many leaders are engaged in agriculture, professional work, business, and government service, while politics itself has become an important profession associated with power and prestige. Economically, land ownership among Dalit leaders remains weak, although many now belong to an emerging middle class with comparatively high annual incomes. Political experience among respondents is relatively limited, with many newcomers entering politics in recent years. Most leaders maintain loyalty to their political parties and often emerge from backgrounds of social activism and Ambedkarite movements. The study further highlights the influence of kinship networks, reservation policies, and family political backgrounds in shaping Dalit leadership. At the same time, ideological shifts are visible, as some Dalit leaders increasingly align with right-wing political trends rather than traditional liberal or Ambedkarite politics.

8.2.3 Changing Dalit Political Party Leadership in Maharashtra during the Post-Independence Period

The expansion of Dalit participation in electoral politics after independence represents a significant transformation in Maharashtra's political landscape. Scheduled Castes, once excluded from political power, gradually became active participants in democratic processes through reserved constituencies, political mobilization, and party representation. Dalit voters and leaders are now associated with multiple political parties as well as independent political

movements, reflecting the diversification of Dalit politics. However, candidates representing radical or independent ideological movements have generally failed to achieve electoral success. Mainstream political parties continue to dominate electoral competition, limiting the growth of independent Dalit political alternatives. Despite these limitations, political participation has played an important role in raising issues of caste exploitation, discrimination, self-respect, social justice, and human rights. Electoral politics has become an important medium through which Dalits assert their identity and dignity in society. Reservation policies have encouraged political parties to nominate Scheduled Caste candidates in reserved constituencies, thereby increasing Dalit representation in legislative institutions. Nevertheless, opposition unity among Dalit-oriented and marginalized groups remains weak, reducing their collective political influence. At the same time, upper-caste dominance and caste hierarchy continue to shape political structures, forcing many Dalit leaders to depend on dominant political parties and compromise on ideological positions. Contemporary Dalit political leadership also reflects ideological diversity and fragmentation. Ambedkarite, socialist, liberal, and right-wing tendencies coexist within Dalit politics, indicating changing political alignments and the complex nature of Dalit leadership in modern Maharashtra.

8.2.4 The Changing Nature of Dalit Political Leadership in Maharashtra

8.2.4.1 Changes in Social Behaviour of Leaders

The study highlights important transformations in Dalit political leadership and its relationship with society in Maharashtra. Most Dalit leaders initially emerged from social movements inspired by Ambedkarite ideology and struggles for social justice. However, after attaining political power and formal leadership positions, their direct involvement in social movements declined considerably. Political responsibilities and electoral commitments gradually replaced grassroots activism. At the same time, interaction between leaders and village-level Dalit activists increased through meetings and organizational activities. This indicates that political leadership strengthened communication with grassroots workers and improved organizational networks. Public support during elections also changed over time. Financial assistance for election campaigns increased after leaders achieved political status, but moral and physical support from ordinary people declined. Many leaders believed that the public was less interested in participating in social and religious welfare activities. Collaboration with political parties, police, and administrative institutions improved slightly after leaders entered mainstream politics. However, only a limited number of respondents felt that such cooperation

directly benefited Dalit communities. Communication patterns also changed significantly. Earlier, leaders mainly relied on public meetings and gatherings, whereas mobile phones and modern communication methods later became important tools for maintaining contact with society. The study further shows that Dalit leaders continued to maintain emotional attachment and solidarity with the Dalit community. Public trust in leaders increased after they gained leadership positions because of their political and social contributions. Leaders also showed improvement in fulfilling promises and commitments made to the public. Socio-cultural activities organized by Dalit leaders underwent transformation over time. Traditional forms of social activities declined and were replaced by modern cultural events, competitions, and public programs. Nevertheless, celebrations related to Dr. B. R. Ambedkar, Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj, and Jyotirao Phule continued to remain central to Dalit socio-cultural identity. Although the popularity of leaders increased after entering politics, reduced engagement with local constituencies negatively affected their public reputation in some areas.

8.2.4.2 Changes in the Strategic Behavior of the Leaders

The study reveals significant changes in the political campaign strategies and developmental priorities of Dalit leaders in Maharashtra. Over time, Dalit political leadership has increasingly adopted modern election campaign techniques, including long marches, vehicle advertisements, public rallies, and the distribution of meals, money, and alcohol during elections. These practices indicate the growing influence of competitive electoral politics and changing campaign culture among Dalit leaders. Grassroots-level planning has become central to electoral success. Leaders now focus more strategically on areas with larger voter populations and frequently interact with local communities during election campaigns. After attaining leadership positions, the use of voter-centered strategies increased considerably. Dalit leaders also emphasized mobilizing women voters and strengthening support through village-level activists. Emotional speeches, transport arrangements for voters, and detailed analysis of voter distribution became important tools in political campaigning. In terms of development orientation, Dalit leaders placed greater emphasis on rural development compared to urban development. Their primary focus remained on improving social infrastructure such as roads, drinking water, sanitation, electricity, education, healthcare, and housing facilities in their constituencies. Economic infrastructure, including irrigation, agro-marketing, industrial growth, and electricity expansion, received comparatively secondary importance. These priorities reflect the leaders' concern for improving the basic living conditions and welfare of marginalized rural communities.

8.2.4.3 Changes in Political and Administrative Behavior of Dalit Leaders

The study highlights the changing relationship between Dalit political leaders and party organizations in Maharashtra. Most respondents reported positive relations with party high commands after attaining political leadership positions. Conflicts with party leadership declined significantly, indicating that Dalit leaders gradually became more integrated within mainstream party structures. This adjustment strengthened their political stability and acceptance within their respective parties. The performance of Dalit leaders in legislative assemblies was considered an important factor in gaining prestige and political influence. Many respondents believed that their speeches and participation in assembly debates were attractive, effective, and influential in raising public issues. However, the study also found that some leaders remained less active during legislative sessions, which reduced their visibility and effectiveness in parliamentary politics. Active participation in legislative work was viewed as essential for strengthening leadership status and public recognition. The study further reveals that trust from party high commands increased considerably after respondents became established political leaders. Party leadership developed greater confidence in leaders who demonstrated electoral success and organizational capability. Similarly, the influence of Dalit leaders over public administration also improved after attaining political authority. Before entering leadership positions, their control over administrative officials was limited, but later they gained greater influence in administrative decision-making and governance processes. This reflects the growth of political power, authority, and institutional influence among Dalit leaders in Maharashtra.

8.2.4.4 Economic Changes in Dalit Leadership

The study highlights important economic changes in the lives of Dalit political leaders after attaining leadership positions. The annual income of many Dalit leaders increased considerably due to their growing political influence, social status, and professional opportunities. However, despite this improvement, significant economic inequality continued to exist among Dalit politicians, with some leaders possessing far greater financial resources than others. The study also found that election expenditure before elections was extremely high in comparison to post-election expenses. Contesting elections required substantial spending on campaigns, public meetings, transportation, advertisements, and voter mobilization. This demonstrates the increasing commercialization and financial burden of

democratic politics. Another major finding was the rise in loan burdens among Dalit leaders after entering politics. Many leaders borrowed money to finance election campaigns and political activities. This indicates that political leadership often involves considerable financial pressure and economic risk, especially for leaders from socially and economically marginalized communities.

8.2.4.5 Changes in Personality and Psychology of Dalit Leaders

The study reveals that leadership experience brought significant positive changes in the personal and political development of Dalit leaders in Maharashtra. Most respondents believed that their wisdom, understanding, and decision-making abilities improved considerably after assuming leadership positions. Practical political experience, interaction with people, and participation in governance helped leaders develop broader social and political awareness. The majority of Dalit leaders also stated that their political vision became more inclusive, transparent, and socially oriented over time. Leadership responsibilities encouraged them to think beyond narrow caste interests and focus on larger issues such as social justice, development, welfare, and democratic participation. This transformation reflected a growing sense of responsibility toward both their communities and society as a whole. The study further highlights that leadership experience contributed to improvements in working methods, administrative efficiency, and political skills. Leaders became more capable in handling public issues, coordinating with political parties and government institutions, and managing election campaigns effectively. Communication skills, organizational abilities, and problem-solving capacities also improved significantly. Overall, leadership experience strengthened the confidence, competence, and political maturity of Dalit leaders, enabling them to participate more effectively in Maharashtra's democratic and administrative processes.

8.2.5 Perceptions and Role of Dalit Political Leaders in Socio-Economic Upliftment of Dalits

8.2.5.1 Perceptions of Dalit Leaders Concerning Dalits

The study highlights that caste continues to play a major role in shaping the socio-economic condition of Dalits in Maharashtra. Many Dalit leaders believed that caste-based hierarchy and dependence on upper castes still negatively affect the development and empowerment of Dalit communities. Despite constitutional safeguards and political representation, Dalits often

continue to face exploitation, inequality, and social exclusion. The respondents also argued that the caste system has limited meaningful social transformation in Maharashtra. Most leaders provided realistic and critical views regarding persistent caste inequality and social discrimination. Major problems identified by Dalit leaders included lack of quality education, unemployment, poor healthcare, landlessness, inadequate housing, social humiliation, exploitative labor conditions, and the struggle for dignity and equal rights. The study further found that caste discrimination continues to exist within political parties and society, although some respondents believed that discrimination has declined in modern times. Reservation policies were strongly supported by most Dalit leaders, who viewed them as essential tools for social justice and representation. Some leaders also favored reservations for economically weaker sections, provided that existing Dalit and OBC reservations remain unaffected. Although political parties were often criticized for using welfare policies as vote-bank strategies, many leaders acknowledged that government welfare schemes have contributed to improving the socio-economic condition of Dalits compared to the pre-independence period.

"महाराष्ट्र के कराड स्थित प्रीतिसंगम में कोयना और कृष्णा नदियों के पवित्र संगम पर स्थित यशवंतराव चव्हाण स्मारक (समाधि) का दर्शन करते हुए तथा उनके नेतृत्व, राष्ट्रसेवा और लोकतांत्रिक मूल्यों को श्रद्धापूर्वक नमन करते हुए।"

8.2.5.2 Role of Dalit Leaders in Socio-Economic Upliftment

The study highlights the enduring influence of Dr. B. R. Ambedkar on Dalit political leadership in Maharashtra. Most respondents regarded Ambedkar as the greatest leader and true emancipator of Dalits because he secured constitutional rights, political representation, and social dignity for marginalized communities. Many leaders believed that, despite the rise of several Dalit political figures after independence, no leader has been able to replace Ambedkar's vision and contribution. Respondents also expressed strong faith in social reformers and movements that challenged caste oppression and promoted equality and justice in Indian society. Several leaders described Ambedkar as a savior whose mission of social transformation was not effectively continued by later Dalit leadership. The study further revealed that entry into politics requires financial resources, public support, political knowledge, and organizational skills. Some respondents criticized contemporary Dalit politicians for prioritizing personal interests over community welfare. Many Dalit leaders also admitted facing discrimination and limitations within their own political parties, where dependence on party leadership restricted independent action for Dalit welfare. Despite these constraints, leaders contributed significantly to socio-cultural and economic development through welfare programs such as community halls, sanitation, drinking water facilities, educational and health initiatives, employment camps, road construction, electrification, irrigation projects, and support for Dalit entrepreneurship. These findings underline the evolving yet challenging nature of Dalit political leadership in Maharashtra. (Constitution of India, 1950)

8.2.5.3 History of Dalit Leadership

The study concludes that Dalit political leadership in Maharashtra emerged from the Dalit movement and the struggle against untouchability led by B. R. Ambedkar. Ambedkar played a foundational role in encouraging political consciousness and leadership among Dalit communities. Maharashtra became the earliest region where organized Dalit political leadership developed during the pre-independence period. The elections involving the Independent Labour Party were highly contested, especially against the Indian National Congress in reserved constituencies. The study further notes that the Scheduled Castes Federation performed poorly in the 1946 provincial elections, which forced it to seek alliances with other parties after independence. The formation of the Peasants and Workers Party in 1948 reflected resistance to Brahmin dominance within Congress politics. Ambedkar later proposed the Republican Party of India in 1956, shortly before his death. During the 1950s

and 1960s, the RPI gained immense support among Dalits, especially Mahars, and attempted to address issues such as landlessness. The study also concludes that internal fragmentation weakened the RPI during the 1970s. Radical organizations such as the Dalit Panthers emerged during this period. Leaders like Namdeo Dhasal promoted a left-oriented social perspective through the Dalit Panther Manifesto. However, the organization could not sustain itself as a strong institutional force. The study further highlights that despite repeated splits, the Republican Party retained an important place in Maharashtra politics because of its Ambedkarite and left-wing orientation. The 1990s also witnessed the rise of Bahujan and radical political ideologies in the state.

8.2.5.4 Socio-Economic Background of Dalit Political Leaders

The research indicates a major absence of female Dalit political leadership in Maharashtra. Most Dalit leaders continue to follow Hindu religious beliefs, and many leaders prefer urban residence despite representing rural constituencies. Educational attainment among Dalit leaders was found to be moderate, particularly weak among the Matang community. Most leaders came from agriculture-based families, though many lacked substantial land ownership. None of the leaders qualified as large landlords. The study also reveals that youth participation in Dalit politics remains low in Maharashtra. Economically, a small Dalit middle class has emerged, though its size remains limited. Family political background and inspiration from reformers such as Jyotirao Phule, Shahu Maharaj, and Ambedkar strongly influenced political participation. The majority of Dalit leaders were associated with the Indian National Congress and the Nationalist Congress Party.

8.2.5.5 Changing Dalit Political Party Leadership in Maharashtra

The study observes that Dalit participation in electoral politics has expanded through multiple political parties, though this has also led to fragmentation of votes. Independent radical candidates have generally failed to achieve electoral success despite ideological commitment. Political participation has nevertheless helped articulate issues of exploitation, oppression, dignity, self-respect, and human rights among Dalits. Political parties increasingly nominate Scheduled Caste candidates in reserved constituencies, though meaningful united struggle between ruling and opposition groups remains weak. The study also concludes that caste-based hierarchy and upper-caste dominance continue to produce political segregation and isolation, making reservation in politics necessary for Dalit representation. Dependence on dominant political parties for electoral victory often forces Dalit leaders into political

compromise. Dalit leadership today reflects multiple ideological strands, and ideological contradictions among leaders are increasingly common.

8.2.5.6 Changing Nature of Dalit Political Leadership

The research highlights that social movements remain the primary source of Dalit political leadership. However, after becoming legislators, many leaders reduced their involvement in strengthening grassroots movements. Public participation and social connectivity improved through modern communication technologies, though efforts to increase social participation among Dalits remained limited.

8.2.5.7 Perception and Role of Dalit Leaders in Socio-Economic Upliftment of Dalits

The study concludes that Dalit leaders in Maharashtra perceive caste-based discrimination, economic dependency on upper castes, and social exclusion as the major problems affecting the Dalit community. According to them, Dalits continue to remain marginalized from the mainstream process of economic development. The investigation further reveals that despite significant government expenditure on programs such as the Dalit Vasti Sudharna Programme, the actual condition of Dalits remains poor because funds are often diverted for other purposes. Corruption and weaknesses in the implementation of welfare schemes have reduced the effectiveness of these developmental initiatives. The study also finds that social discrimination, exploitation, and weak access to agricultural land have trapped Dalits in a vicious cycle of poverty. Many Dalits lack stable livelihood opportunities and struggle to maintain even a minimum standard of living. Unemployment, dependence on agriculture, low creditworthiness, and employment in the unorganized sector characterize the socio-economic conditions of Dalits in Maharashtra. Most Dalit leaders expressed realistic and positive perceptions regarding the problems faced by the Dalit community. They acknowledged that the caste system has obstructed meaningful social transformation in Maharashtra. Issues such as lack of education, poor healthcare, unemployment, social indignity, exploitative working conditions, discrimination, absence of agricultural land, and unhygienic living conditions were identified as major concerns. The study also concludes that discrimination against Dalits continues within non-Dalit political parties. Political parties often use Dalits merely for electoral gain without genuinely supporting their welfare. However, only a few Dalit leaders demonstrated unrealistic or negative perceptions about the community. Overall, Dalit leaders were found to be aware of Dalit issues, though there remains scope for greater sensitivity and understanding. Dalit leaders have undertaken several developmental activities using

government and constituency funds. These include the construction of houses, roads, community halls, drainage systems, and distribution of subsidies through welfare schemes. Nevertheless, structural issues such as access to agricultural land and equal sharing of natural resources continue to remain unresolved.

8.5 Suggestions

The study provides several important suggestions for strengthening Dalit leadership and improving the socio-economic conditions of Dalits in Maharashtra.

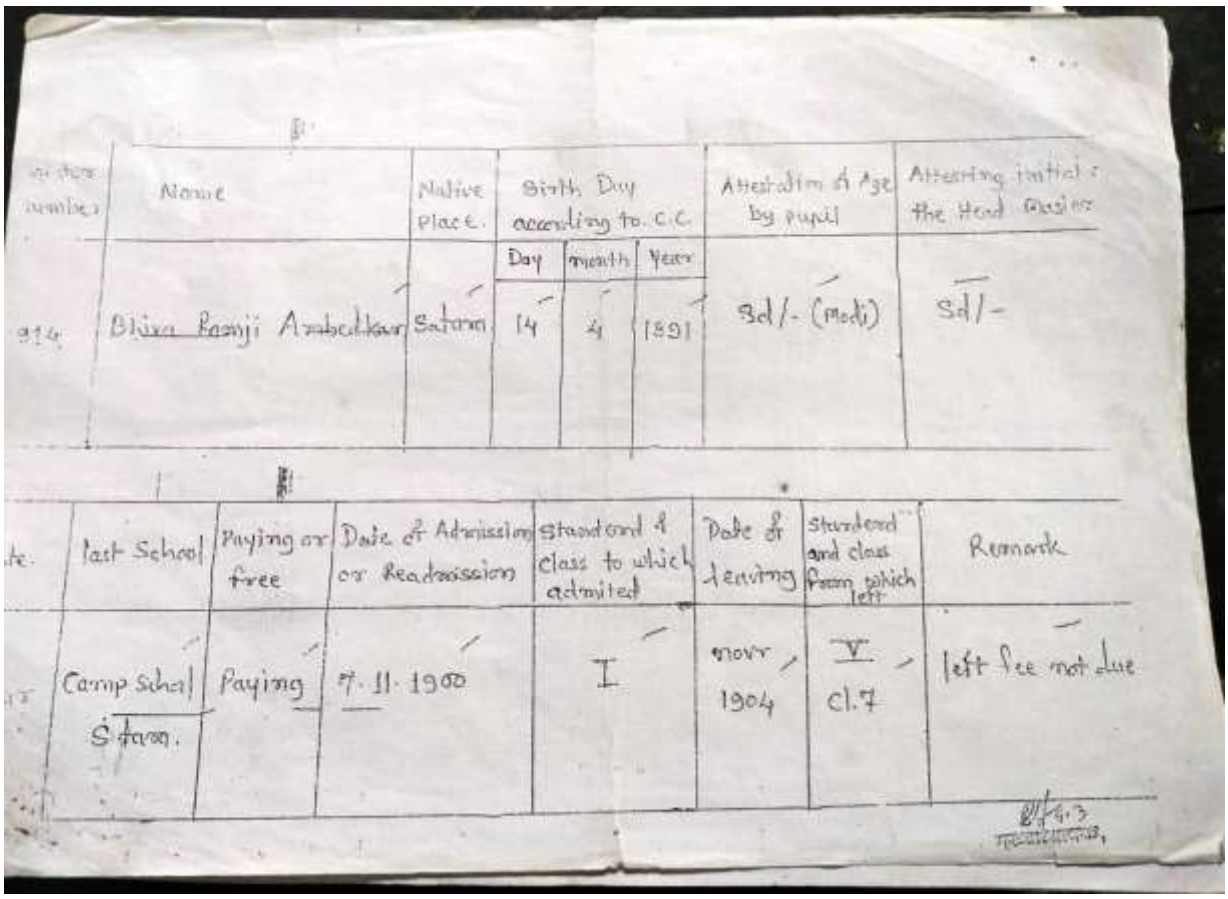
1. **Importance of Ambedkarite Leadership** – Dr. B. R. Ambedkar remains the central inspiration for Dalit political empowerment, constitutional rights, and social justice.
2. **Need for Unity among Dalit Leaders** – Factionalism weakens Dalit politics; therefore, collective action and common ideology are necessary for stronger representation.
3. **Political Participation of Dalit Women** – The study highlights the lack of Dalit women in politics and recommends greater encouragement for women's political leadership.
4. **Effective Legislative Representation** – Dalit legislators should actively raise issues such as unemployment, poverty, landlessness, and discrimination in assemblies with factual support.
5. **Economic, Social, and Political Inclusion** – Comprehensive welfare policies are needed to integrate Dalits into mainstream development.
6. **Community-Oriented Leadership** – Dalit leaders should prioritize community welfare over personal political interests.
7. **Youth Participation in Politics** – Dalit youth should be encouraged through leadership training, workshops, and political awareness programs.
8. **Educational Empowerment** – Scholarships, hostel facilities, and reduction of school dropouts are essential for Dalit development.
9. **Employment and Economic Opportunities** – Employment generation and promotion of Dalit entrepreneurship are necessary for economic upliftment.
10. **Proper Implementation of Welfare Schemes** – Government welfare programs should be monitored effectively to ensure benefits reach Dalit communities.
11. **Need to Eradicate Untouchability** – Awareness campaigns and strict implementation of anti-discrimination laws are required, especially in rural areas.
12. **Financial Support for Dalit Candidates** – Dalit candidates often face financial burdens during elections; therefore, institutional support is necessary.

13. **Changing Political Campaign Strategies** – Modern ICT tools, EVM systems, and strategic campaigning now play an important role in electoral success.
14. **Shift in Development Priorities** – Dalit leaders increasingly focus on roads, healthcare, employment generation, village development, and poverty reduction.
15. **Need for Stronger Dalit Consciousness** – Social reformers' teachings and Ambedkarite ideology remain essential for structural social transformation and empowerment. Finally, the research notes that election expenditure and debts of Dalit leaders are increasing faster than their income growth. Despite these challenges, Dalit leaders in Maharashtra have significantly improved their political skills, leadership abilities, vision, and organizational capacities over time.

8.3 Overall Conclusion

The study presents a detailed examination of the historical evolution, socio-economic background, political transformation, and changing nature of Dalit political leadership in Maharashtra. It highlights that Dalit leadership emerged from the anti-untouchability movement led by B. R. Ambedkar, who transformed Dalits into a politically conscious and organized community. Through his vision of equality, liberty, fraternity, and constitutional democracy, Ambedkar laid the foundation for Dalit political empowerment in India. Organizations such as the Independent Labour Party (ILP), Scheduled Caste Federation (SCF), Republican Party of India (RPI), and later the Dalit Panthers played important roles in mobilizing Dalits against caste oppression and social inequality. The findings reveal that education, reservation policies, democratic participation, urbanization, and Ambedkarite ideology significantly contributed to the rise of Dalit political leadership. Dalit leaders increasingly entered legislative institutions, local governance, and mainstream politics. However, the study also identifies major challenges such as factionalism, ideological divisions, dependence on dominant political parties, weak grassroots organization, and limited women's participation. Despite political representation, caste discrimination, unemployment, poverty, landlessness, social exclusion, and inadequate implementation of welfare schemes continue to affect Dalit communities in Maharashtra. The research further concludes that Dalit leaders have contributed positively to social awareness, welfare programs, educational development, infrastructure, and democratic participation. Yet, many leaders struggle to balance community welfare with electoral and party politics. The study emphasizes that strong, ethical, united, and community-oriented leadership inspired by Ambedkarite ideology remains essential for achieving genuine social justice, equality, dignity, and sustainable socio-

economic empowerment of Dalits. Overall, Dalit political leadership continues to play a crucial role in strengthening Indian democracy and challenging caste-based inequality in society.



Order number	Name	Native Place	Birth Day according to C.C. Day	Month	Year	Attestation of Age by pupil	Attesting initials of the Head Master
914	Bhim Ramji Ambedkar	Satara	14	4	1891	Sd/- (Modi)	Sd/-

Date	Last School	Paying or free	Date of Admission or Readmission	Standard & class to which admitted	Date of leaving	Standard and class from which left	Remark
	Camp School Satara.	Paying	7. 11. 1900	I	Nov 1904	V Cl. 7	left fee not due

"सन 1900 में प्रतापसिंह हाई स्कूल, सातारा में डॉ. बाबासाहेब आंबेडकर के प्रवेश से संबंधित स्थानांतरण प्रमाणपत्र (Transfer Certificate) का अवलोकन करते हुए तथा उनके शैक्षणिक संघर्ष और ज्ञानार्जन की प्रेरणादायी यात्रा को स्मरण करते हुए।"

"पुणे के देहू रोड स्थित ऐतिहासिक बुद्ध विहार (धम्मभूमि) का दर्शन करते हुए, जहाँ 25 दिसंबर 1954 को डॉ. बाबासाहेब आंबेडकर द्वारा रंगून (म्यांमार) से लाई गई भगवान बुद्ध की पवित्र प्रतिमा स्थापित की गई थी, तथा उनके धम्म, समता और मानवता के संदेश को नमन करते हुए।"

CHAPTER–IX

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सदस्य- १. सांविधानिक तथा संसदीय अध्ययन संस्थान (भारतीय संसद, नई दिल्ली)
(Institute of Constitutional and Parliamentary Studies)
२. All India Law Teachers Congress,New Delhi (AILTC)
पत्ता-'शिवनेरी'गट नं.१५३ सातारा रोड,मु.पो.फरांदवाडी ता.फलटण जि.सातारा ४१५५२३

Ref.No. **Date:** 20/12/23

।। जय शिवराय, जय जिजाऊ, जय शंभूराजे, जय भीम।।

प्रति,
माननीय. मुख्यमंत्री महाराष्ट्र राज्य,
माननीय. उपमुख्यमंत्री महाराष्ट्र राज्य,
माननीय. राज्यपाल, महाराष्ट्र राज्य,
विभागीय आयुक्त छत्रपती संभाजीनगर,
जिल्हा अधिकारी कार्यालय छत्रपती संभाजीनगर.
आयुक्त छत्रपती संभाजीनगर महानगरपालिका
मुख्य अधिकारी छत्रपती संभाजीनगर महानगरपालिका
छत्रपती संभाजीनगर.

09/01/2024
लिपीक.
विभागीय आयुक्त कार्यालय
छत्रपती संभाजीनगर
आवक 09.01.2024
लिपीक
जिल्हाअधिकारी कार्यालय
छत्रपती संभाजीनगर

सविनय सादर

विषय : मराठवाडा विभाग मध्ये श्रीमंत छत्रपती महाराणी सईबाई महाराज यांचे शासकीय स्मारकसाठी जागा/परवानगरी मिळण्याबाबत.

सदंर्भ : १) २७/९/२०२३ ला दिलेले पत्र मा. उपविभागीय अधिकारी बारामती उपविभाग, बारामती
२) मा. तहसिलदार सो, तहसिलदार कार्यालय बारामती.
३) मा. गटशिक्षण अधिकारी सो. पंचायत समिती बारामती.
४) मुख्यअधिकारी सो. बारामती नगरपरिषद, बारामती.

अर्जदार : अँड. गणेश श्रीरंग सातारकर (नाळे), मो. ९४२२४२२९३२
रा. फरांदवाडी, ता. फलटण, जि. सातारा

औरंगाबाद स्मार्ट सिटी डेव्हलपमेंट कॉर्पोरेशन लिमिटेड Received 9/1/2024

माननीय महोदय,

मी अँड. गणेश श्रीरंग सातारकर (नाळे) फलटणचे मुळ रहिवाशी आहेत व फलटणला ऐतहासिक मोठी परंपरा आहे. श्रीमंत छत्रपती महाराणी सईबाई महाराज फलटणच्या निंबाळकर राज्य घराण्यातील होत्या व त्या श्रीमंत छत्रपती शिवाजी महाराज यांच्या पत्नी व श्रीमंत छत्रपती संभाजी महाराज यांच्या आई होत्या त्यामुळे आम्हा जनतेला विनम्र अभिवादन वर्षाचे ३६५ दिवस करता येण्यासाठी त्यांचे शासकीय स्मारक नाही. त्याच्यासाठी शासनाकडून स्मारकासाठी जागा/परवानगी मिळावी ही विनंती असे.

Chhatrapati Sambhajinagar Municipal Corporation

Adv.Ganesh Shrirang Satarkar (Nale) ADVOCATE MAH/1675/2021

आपला
सातारकर
अँड. गणेश श्रीरंग सातारकर (नाळे)
Adv.Ganesh Shrirang Satarkar (Nale)

Mob-9422422932 / 8432422932 Email-advganeshsatarkar@gmail.com

जिल्हाधिकारी तथा जिल्हादंडाधिकारी कार्यालय, छत्रपती संभाजीनगर
(गृह शाखा)
मध्यवर्ती प्रशासकीय इमारत, फाजलपुरा,छत्रपती संभाजीनगर
दुरध्वनी: ०२४०-२३३४५०१ ई-मेल : abdcoll@gmail.com

जा.क्र.2024/गृहशाखा/दंडविभाग/संकलन-5 कावि 22 दिनांक 04.01.2024

प्रति,
मा. तहसिलदार महसूल,
जिल्हाधिकारी कार्यालय,
छत्रपती संभाजीनगर.

विषय :- मराठवाडा विभाग मध्ये श्रीमंत छत्रपती महाराणी सईबाई महाराज यांचे शासकीय स्मारकसाठी जागा मिळणे बाबत.

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संदर्भ :- श्री अँड गणेश श्रीरंग सातारकर पत्ता शिवनेरी गट नं. 153 सातारा रोड, मु.पो. फरांदवाडी ता. फलटण जि. सातारा यांचे निवेदन दिनांक 02.01.2024

महोदय,

उपरोक्त विषयी श्री अँड गणेश श्रीरंग सातारकर पत्ता शिवनेरी गट नं. 153 सातारा रोड, मु.पो. फरांदवाडी ता. फलटण जि. सातारा यांचे निवेदन या कार्यालयास प्राप्त झाले असून सदर निवेदना मध्ये मराठवाडा विभाग मध्ये श्रीमंत छत्रपती महाराणी सईबाई महाराज यांचे शासकीय स्मारकसाठी जागा मिळणे बाबत.. असे निवेदनात नमुद केले आहे.

संदर्भिय निवेदन आपल्या कार्यालयाशी संबंधीत असल्यामुळे निवेदनाची छायांकित प्रत यासोबत पाठविण्यात येत असून निवेदनातील नमुद मुद्दाच्या अनुषंगाने शासन गृह विभागाचे परिपत्रक क्रमांक संकीर्ण 0721/प्र.क्र.144/विशा-1अ दि.10 ऑगस्ट 2021, नियमानुसार तात्काळ आवश्यक ती कार्यवाही करुन अर्जदारास आपल्या स्तरावर समर्पक उत्तर देण्यात यावे हि विनंती.

(सोबत - वरीलप्रमाणे छायांकित प्रत.)

05.1.24
(अरुण पंडुरे)
नायब तहसिलदार (गृह)
जिल्हाधिकारी कार्यालय छत्रपती संभाजीनगर

प्रतिलिपी,

श्री अँड गणेश श्रीरंग सातारकर पत्ता शिवनेरी गट नं. 153 सातारा रोड, मु.पो. फरांदवाडी ता. फलटण जि. सातारा यांना कळविण्यात येते की आपल्या प्रकरणात संदर्भीत या कार्यालया कडुन योग्य ती कार्यवाही करण्यात आली आहे.

भारत सरकार सत्यमेव जयते
O.I.G.S.

लघुलेखक/टंकलेखक/अ.का.
जिल्हाधिकारी कार्यालय
छत्रपती संभाजीनगर

विभागीय आयुक्त कार्यालय, छत्रपती संभाजीनगर

दिल्ली गेट, जळगाव रोड, छत्रपती संभाजीनगर

दुरध्वनी क्रमांक- ०२४०-२३५३५६२ Email- dcraurangabad@gmail.com

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जा. क्र. २०२३/मशाका/जमीन-१/कावी- १९०७ दि. .१२.२०२३
01.01.2024

प्रति,

मा. जिल्हाधिकारी छत्रपती संभाजीनगर.

विषयः- मराठवाडा विभाग मध्ये श्रीमंत छत्रपती महाराणी सईबाई महाराज यांचे शासकीय स्मारकसाठी जागा / परवानगी मिळण्याबाबत.

संदर्भः- ॲड. गणेश श्रीरंग सातारकर (नाळे), रा. 'शिवनेरी' गट नं. १५३ सातारा रोड, मु. पो. फरांदवाडी, ता. फलटण, जि. सातारा- ४१५५२३ यांचे निवेदन दि. १९.१२.२०२३.

उपरोक्त विषयी संदर्भीय निवेदनाच्या अनुषंगाने कळविण्यात येते की, संदर्भीय निवेदनाव्दारे निवेदनार्थी यांनी मराठवाडा विभाग मध्ये श्रीमंत छत्रपती महाराणी सईबाई महाराज यांचे शासकीय स्मारकसाठी जागा / परवानगी मिळण्याबाबत विनंती केली आहे. सुलभ संदर्भासाठी संदर्भीय निवेदनाची प्रत सोबत पाठविण्यात येत आहे.

करिता संदर्भीय निवदेनाच्या अनुषंगाने नियमानुसार कार्यवाही करण्यात यावी तसेच आपण केलेल्या कार्यवाहीबाबत निवेदनार्थी यांना आपल्या स्तरावरुन कळविण्यात यावे, ही विनंती.

सोबतः- संदर्भीय निवेदनाची प्रत (सहपत्रासह)

(डॉ. अनंत गव्हाणे)
उपायुक्त (महसूल)
विभागीय आयुक्त कार्यालय, छत्रपती संभाजीनगर.

लिपिक
विभागीय आयुक्त कार्यालय
छत्रपती संभाजीनगर

प्रतिलिपीः-

ॲड. गणेश श्रीरंग सातारकर (नाळे), रा. 'शिवनेरी' गट नं. १५३ सातारा रोड, मु. पो. फरांदवाडी, ता. फलटण, जि. सातारा- ४१५५२३ यांना माहितीस्तव.

Forwarded letter to Aurangabad

स्वातंत्र्याचा अमृत महोत्सव

महाराष्ट्र शासन
विभागीय आयुक्त कार्यालय औरंगाबाद
(सामान्य प्रशासन शाखा)

दुरध्वनी क्र.- 0240-2339811 पत्ता- दिल्ली गेट जवळ, औरंगाबाद 431001 Email-dcg.aurangabad@gmail.com

---

जा.क्र.-2023/सा.प्र./आस्था/निवेदन/कावी-380 दिनांक- 26/12/2023.

प्रति,

मा.श्री विजय पोवार,
उप सचिव (समिती कक्ष),
मा.न्यायमूर्ती श्री संदीप शिंदे (निवृत्त) समिती कक्ष
सामान्य प्रशासन विभाग, दालन क्रमांक 722, 7 वा मजला,(विस्तार),
हुतात्मा राजगुरु चौक, मंत्रालय, मुंबई – 400032

01 JAN 2024
Inward Number

विषय:- तातडीने गरजवंत, गरजू सर्व मराठा समाजाला आरक्षण मिळणे बाबत.

संदर्भ:-	ॲड.गणेश श्रीरंग सातारकर (नाळे) शिवनेरी गट नं.153 सातारा रोड, मु.पो.फरांदवाडी ता.फलटण जि.सातारा, दि.19/12/2023 प्राप्त दिनांक 26/12/2023

महोदय,

विषयांकीत प्रकरणी ॲड.गणेश श्रीरंग सातारकर (नाळे) शिवनेरी गट नं.153 सातारा रोड, मु.पो.फरांदवाडी ता.फलटण जि.सातारा यांनी संदर्भिय निवेदन व्दारे गरजवंत मराठा समाजाला आरक्षण संवैधानिक, कायदेशीर न्यायालयात टिकणारे व पुढील पिढीसाठी पिढयान पिढया टिकणारे चिरकाल असणारे आरक्षण द्यावे व हा लवकरात लवकर निर्णय घावे अशी विनंती केलेली आहे.

2415

प्रस्तूत निवेदनाची प्रत पुढील योग्य कार्यवाहीस्तव यासोबत सविनय पाठविण्यात येत आहे,

सोबत :- वरीलप्रमाणे.

(अरुण पावडे),
तहसीलदार (सामान्य प्रशासन)
छत्रपती संभाजीनगर.

प्रत,

ॲड.गणेश श्रीरंग सातारकर (नाळे) शिवनेरी गट नं.153 सातारा रोड, मु.पो.फरांदवाडी ता.फलटण जि.सातारा,- (मोबाईल- 9422422932) यांना संदर्भिय पत्राच्या अनुषंगाने माहितीस्तव अग्रेषित.

लिपिक
विभागीय आयुक्त कार्यालय
छत्रपती संभाजीनगर

By Speed Post
Right to Information

PRIME MINISTER'S OFFICE

Seva Teerth
New Delhi - 110011

No. RTI/2549/2026-PMR

Dated: 20 -04 -2026

To

The CPIO
Election Commission of India
Nirvachan Sadan, New Delhi

Subject: Application under Right to Information Act, 2005

An online application dated 17.04.2026 **(online no. PMOIN/R/E/26/01356)** received from Shri Ganesh Shrirang Satarkar on the above noted subject is transferred under section 6(3) (ii) of the Right to Information Act, 2005, for action as appropriate.

2. Application fee has been received.

(Parvesh Kumar)
Under Secretary & CPIO
☎ : 2338 2590

Copy through RTI Online Portal to:

Shri Ganesh Shrirang Satarkar,
Shivneri Gat No. 153,
Mane Mala, Satara Road,
At Post Pharandwadi,
Tal Phaltan District Satara,
Pin Code-415523

You are advised to approach the above public authority for further information regarding the matter.

LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
RTI BRANCH

No.1(555)/IC/26 **20.04.2026**

OFFICE MEMORANDUM

Subject :- Transfer of application under Section 6(3) of the RTI Act, 2005.

The undersigned is directed to transfer, under Section 6(3) of the RTI Act, 2005, the RTI application of **Adv. Ganesh Shrirang Satarkar** dated 17.04.2026 as the subject matter of the application closely pertains to the **Election Commission of India.**

2. A copy of this OM is being endorsed to the applicant for information.

Sd/-
(Suman Sharma)
Under Secretary

To

Shri Santosh Dubey
Under Secretary & CPIO,
Election Commission of India,
Nirvachan Sadan,
Ashoka Road, New Delhi – 110001.

Copy to:

Adv. Ganesh Shrirang Satarkar, Shivneri Gat No. 153 Mane Mala, Satara Raod at Post Pharandwadi, Tal Phaltan District Satara-415523.

Sd/-
(Suman Sharma)
Under Secretary

F. No. LEGIS/R/E/26/00157–RTI (LD)
Government of India
Ministry of Law & Justice
Legislative Department

Kartavya Bhawan- 2, New Delhi
Date: 23rd April, 2026.

To,

The CPIO
Election Commission of India
Nirvachan Sadan
New Delhi - 110003

Sub:- Application under Right to Information Act, 2005-reg.

Sir/ Madam,

Please refer to online RTI application of Adv. Ganesh Shrirang Satarkar, dated 17.04.2026 (copy enclosed). The RTI Application closely relates to the Election Commission of India, however, Election Commission is not registered with the RTI – MIS portal. Therefore, the RTI application is transferred physically to the Election Commission of India under section 6(3) of the RTI Act, 2005 with the request to send a suitable reply directly to the applicant.

Encl: As Above

Yours faithfully,

(Diksha Prakash)
Section Officer & CPIO
Email – rti-legis@gov.in
Tel: 011-23782134

Copy to: Adv. Ganesh Shrirang Satarkar, Address- Shivneri Gat No. 153, Mane Mala, Satara Road, At Post: Pharandwadi, Tal Phaltan District: Satara, Maharashtra PIN: 415523, with the request to approach the above mentioned public authority in this regard. The applicant may also file an RTI with ECI at **https://rti.eci.nic.in/.**

F. No. LEGIS/R/T/26/00213–RTI (LD)
Government of India
Ministry of Law & Justice
Legislative Department

Kartavya Bhawan- 2, New Delhi
Date: 23rd April, 2026.

To,

The CPIO
Election Commission of India
Nirvachan Sadan
New Delhi - 110003

Sub:- Application under Right to Information Act, 2005-reg.

Sir/ Madam,

Please refer to online RTI application transferred from Ministry of Home Affairs of Adv. Ganesh Shrirang Satarkar, dated 20.04.2026 (copy enclosed). The RTI Application closely relates to the Election Commission of India, however, Election Commission is not registered with the RTI – MIS portal. Therefore, the RTI application is transferred physically to the Election Commission of India under section 6(3) of the RTI Act, 2005 with the request to send a suitable reply directly to the applicant.

Encl: As Above

Yours faithfully,

(Diksha Prakash)
Section Officer & CPIO
Email – rti-legis@gov.in
Tel: 011-23782134

Copy to: Adv. Ganesh Shrirang Satarkar, Address- Shivneri Gat No. 153, Mane Mala, Satara Road, At Post: Pharandwadi, Tal Phaltan District: Satara, Maharashtra PIN: 415523, with the request to approach the above mentioned public authority in this regard. The applicant may also file an RTI with ECI at **https://rti.eci.nic.in/.**

ACTION HISTORY OF RTI REQUEST No.LOKSS/R/E/26/00229

Applicant Name ADV GANESH SHRIRANG SATARKAR

Text of Application

I respectfully submit this application under Section 6(1) of the Right to Information Act, 2005, seeking specific and certified information regarding the representation of Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) in the Lok Sabha from the State of Maharashtra, for the period commencing from 1991 (post-implementation of the Mandal Commission recommendations) to the present. Kindly provide election-wise and year-wise details of Members of Parliament elected from Maharashtra belonging to SC and ST categories, including their names, constituencies, political party affiliations, and the total number of seats reserved for SC and ST in each Lok Sabha election. Further, provide a constituency-wise list of seats reserved for SC and ST in Maharashtra for each election, along with details of any changes in reservation status due to delimitation exercises, particularly the Delimitation Commission order of 2008. I also request Census-wise data on SC and ST population in Maharashtra for the years 1991, 2001, 2011, and the latest available Census, and any available comparative analysis between population proportion and parliamentary representation. Additionally, kindly furnish details of voter population belonging to SC and ST categories in reserved constituencies, if maintained, along with the legal provisions, constitutional basis (including relevant Articles such as 330 to 342), and criteria governing reservation of parliamentary constituencies. Further, provide copies of any official reports, studies, evaluations, or impact assessments conducted by the Government, Election Commission of India, or any competent authority concerning SC/ST political representation in Maharashtra. I request that the information be provided in certified copies or electronic format, as available. If any part of the requested information falls under another public authority, the same may kindly be transferred under Section 6(3) of the RTI Act. In case any information is denied, reasons for such denial may be provided in accordance with Section 8 and 9 of the RTI Act.

Reply of Application as attached

SN.	Action Taken	Date of Action	Action Taken By	Remarks
1	RTI REQUEST RECEIVED	17/04/2026	Nodal Officer	
2	REQUEST FORWARDED TO CPIO	17/04/2026	Nodal Officer	Forwarded to CPIO(s) : (1) L. Nemjalhing Haokip
3	REQUEST PARTIALLY TRANSFERRED TO OTHER PUBLIC AUTHORITY	20/04/2026	L. Nemjalhing Haokip-(CPIO)	1) Ministry of Home Affairs : vide registration number MHOME/R/X/26/00207
4	REQUEST DISPOSED OF	20/04/2026	L. Nemjalhing Haokip-(CPIO)	

Print

LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
RTI BRANCH

No.1(555)/IC/26 **20.04.2026**

OFFICE MEMORANDUM

Subject :- Transfer of application under Section 6(3) of the RTI Act, 2005.

The undersigned is directed to transfer, under Section 6(3) of the RTI Act, 2005, the RTI application of **Adv. Ganesh Shrirang Satarkar** dated 17.04.2026 as the subject matter of the application closely pertains to the **Election Commission of India.**

2. A copy of this OM is being endorsed to the applicant for information.

Sd/-
(Suman Sharma)
Under Secretary

To

Shri Santosh Dubey
Under Secretary & CPIO,
Election Commission of India,
Nirvachan Sadan,
Ashoka Road, New Delhi – 110001.

Copy to:

Adv. Ganesh Shrirang Satarkar, Shivneri Gat No. 153 Mane Mala, Satara Raod at Post Pharandwadi, Tal Phaltan District Satara-415523.

Sd/-
(Suman Sharma)
Under Secretary

A+ A A-

Select Language: English

Public Authorities Available

RTI Online

Version 2.0

An Initiative of Department of Personnel & Training, Government of India

Final Status of ORGOI/R/T/26/00266

Applicant Name	ADV GANESH SHRIRANG SATARKAR
Date of receipt	20/04/2026
Request Filed With	Office of the Registrar General of India
Text of Application	The subject matter also pertains to your Ministry.
Request document *(if any)*	document not provided
Status	**REQUEST DISPOSED OF** as on 27/04/2026
Date of Action	27/04/2026
Remarks	**Reply :-** Partially related to this office. As per Census 1991, 2001, 2011, the SC and ST wise data of all States/UTs (including Maharashtra) are available online at Census of India website www.censusindia.gov.in and can be access by the following process: For 2011 Census: https://censusindia.gov.in/ -- Census Tables (2011, 2001 & 1991) -- Select Census Year (2011) -- Select Primary Census Abstract -- Select Table -- (i) PCA (SC): Primary census abstract data for Scheduled Castes State, District (For SC) (ii) PCA (ST): Primary census abstract data for Scheduled Tribes State, District (For ST) For 2001 Census: https://censusindia.gov.in/ -- Census Tables (2011, 2001 & 1991) -- Select Census Year (2011) -- Select Primary Census Abstract -- Select Table -- (i) PCA (SC): Primary Census Abstract - Scheduled Castes (ii) PCA (ST): Primary Census Abstract - Scheduled Tribes For 1991 Census: https://censusindia.gov.in/ -- Census Tables (2011, 2001 & 1991) -- Select Census Year (2011) -- Select Primary Census Abstract -- Select Table -- (i) PCA (SC): Primary Census Abstract (ii) PCA (ST): Primary Census Abstract Also, Your RTI application has been transferred to Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment and Ministry of Tribal Affairs.

Print

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A+ A A-

Select Language: English

Public Authorities Available

RTI Online

Version 2.0

An Initiative of Department of Personnel & Training, Government of India

Final Status of MOSJE/R/T/26/00365

Applicant Name	ADV GANESH SHRIRANG SATARKAR
Date of receipt	28/04/2026
Request Filed With	Ministry of Social Justice & Empowerment
Text of Application	I hereby seek the following information under the Right to Information Act 2005 Whether the Central Government or State Government has conducted any survey study or research regarding the social and educational status of the Brahmin community If yes kindly provide copies of such reports Whether any proposal recommendation or committee report regarding reservation for the Brahmin community has been submitted considered or is pending with the Government If yes provide detailed information and copies of relevant documents What are the criteria and guidelines prescribed by the Government for granting reservation to any community Kindly provide copies of relevant rules notifications or policies What action has been taken by the Government on representations or demands made by the Brahmin community for reservation Provide details of applications petitions or memorandums received by the Government in the last 10 years regarding reservation demands from the Brahmin community along with the action taken on them I am enclosing the prescribed application fee of Rs 10 Kindly provide the requested information within the stipulated time period under the RTI Act 2005
Request document *(if any)*	document not provided
Status	**REQUEST DISPOSED OF** as on 14/05/2026
Date of Action	14/05/2026
Remarks	**Reply :-** It is informed that the CPIO does not deal with SC and ST. Further, the CPIO is not supposed to create information or to give clarification or answer hypothetical question or solutions raised by the applicant.

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ACTION HISTORY OF RTI REQUEST No.LOKSS/R/E/26/00229

Applicant Name ADV GANESH SHRIRANG SATARKAR

Text of Application

I respectfully submit this application under Section 6(1) of the Right to Information Act, 2005, seeking specific and certified information regarding the representation of Scheduled Castes (SC) and Scheduled Tribes (ST) in the Lok Sabha from the State of Maharashtra, for the period commencing from 1991 (post-implementation of the Mandal Commission recommendations) to the present. Kindly provide election-wise and year-wise details of Members of Parliament elected from Maharashtra belonging to SC and ST categories, including their names, constituencies, political party affiliations, and the total number of seats reserved for SC and ST in each Lok Sabha election. Further, provide a constituency-wise list of seats reserved for SC and ST in Maharashtra for each election, along with details of any changes in reservation status due to delimitation exercises, particularly the Delimitation Commission order of 2008. I also request Census-wise data on SC and ST population in Maharashtra for the years 1991, 2001, 2011, and the latest available Census, and any available comparative analysis between population proportion and parliamentary representation. Additionally, kindly furnish details of voter population belonging to SC and ST categories in reserved constituencies, if maintained, along with the legal provisions, constitutional basis (including relevant Articles such as 330 to 342), and criteria governing reservation of parliamentary constituencies. Further, provide copies of any official reports, studies, evaluations, or impact assessments conducted by the Government, Election Commission of India, or any competent authority concerning SC/ST political representation in Maharashtra. I request that the information be provided in certified copies or electronic format, as available. If any part of the requested information falls under another public authority, the same may kindly be transferred under Section 6(3) of the RTI Act. In case any information is denied, reasons for such denial may be provided in accordance with Section 8 and 9 of the RTI Act.

Reply of Application as attached

SN.	Action Taken	Date of Action	Action Taken By	Remarks
1	RTI REQUEST RECEIVED	17/04/2026	Nodal Officer	
2	REQUEST FORWARDED TO CPIO	17/04/2026	Nodal Officer	Forwarded to CPIO(s) : (1) L. Nemjalhing Haokip
3	REQUEST PARTIALLY TRANSFERRED TO OTHER PUBLIC AUTHORITY	20/04/2026	L. Nemjalhing Haokip-(CPIO)	1) Ministry of Home Affairs : vide registration number MHOME/R/X/26/00207
4	REQUEST DISPOSED OF	20/04/2026	L. Nemjalhing Haokip-(CPIO)	

Print

LOK SABHA SECRETARIAT
RTI BRANCH

No.1(555)/IC/26 **20.04.2026**

OFFICE MEMORANDUM

Subject :- Transfer of application under Section 6(3) of the RTI Act, 2005.

The undersigned is directed to transfer, under Section 6(3) of the RTI Act, 2005, the RTI application of **Adv. Ganesh Shrirang Satarkar** dated 17.04.2026 as the subject matter of the application closely pertains to the **Election Commission of India.**

2. A copy of this OM is being endorsed to the applicant for information.

Sd/-
(Suman Sharma)
Under Secretary

To

Shri Santosh Dubey
Under Secretary & CPIO,
Election Commission of India,
Nirvachan Sadan,
Ashoka Road, New Delhi – 110001.

Copy to:

Adv. Ganesh Shrirang Satarkar, Shivneri Gat No. 153 Mane Mala, Satara Raod at Post Pharandwadi, Tal Phaltan District Satara-415523.

Sd/-
(Suman Sharma)
Under Secretary

CERTIFICATE

OF WORLD RECORD

Proudly Presented To

Ganesh Shrirang Satarkar

In recognition of the outstanding achievement of becoming the First Indian to Translate and Publish the Constitutions of All 54 African Countries into Hindi as Separate ISBN-Registered Books, demonstrating exceptional dedication, scholarly excellence, and a significant contribution to legal literature and linguistic accessibility, thereby establishing a distinguished and historic record of academic accomplishment.

We officially announce the above-mentioned candidate as a globally certified **"Inspiration World Record Holder"**.

The certificate was issued on 27th February, 2026.

INSPIRATION IS WHERE PASSION BECOMES LEGACY

CERTIFIED

Application No. IWR/2026/UR0173
Certificate No. IWR/2026/WRH0081
Issued By: Chief Adjudicator

ISO CERTIFIED

VISHWAGURU ARPANAM 2026

VIA2025/SS-VA2025AZ760-2025-170/09102025

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M/s.Adv.Ganesh Shrirang Satarkar & Co.
Published By This Book

THE END

Email: ganeshnale0@gmail.com | adv.ganeshsatarkar@gmail.com
Mobile: +91 7066766607 | +91 9422422932